COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

PARAPHRASE ON MARK

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VOLUME 49

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COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

General Editor Robert D. Sider

PARAPHRASE ON MARK

translated and annotated by

Erika Rummel

University of Toronto Press

Toronto / Buffalo / London

The research and publication costs of the
Collected Works of Erasmus are supported by the
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
The publication costs are also assisted by
University of Toronto Press.
www.utppublishing.com
© University of Toronto Press 1988
Toronto / Buffalo / London
Printed in Canada

Printed on acid-free paper

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Erasmus, Desiderius, ca. 1466–1536.
[Works]
Collected Works of Erasmus

Partial contents: v. 49. Paraphrase on Mark / translated and annotated by Erika Rummel.
Includes bibliographies and indexes.
ISBN 0-8020-0479-0 (v. 49).
1. Erasmus, Desiderius, ca. 1466–1536. I. Title.
PA8500 1974 876'.04 C74-6326-x rev.

Collected Works of Erasmus

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Contents

Preface
by Robert D. Sider
ix

Translator's Note
by Erika Rummel
xi

Paraphrase on Mark / Paraphrasis in Marcum
translated and annotated by Erika Rummel
1

Notes
177

The Sequence and Dates of the Publication of the Paraphrases
220

Works Frequently Cited
221

Short-Title Forms for Erasmus' Works
223

General Index
227

Index of Theological Terms
232

Index of Greek and Latin Words Cited
235

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Preface

The nature and scope of the series of volumes to be published as the New Testament scholarship of Erasmus have been described in the preface to volume 42. That volume also provided introductory studies on the origin and nature of the *Paraphrases*, their publication history, and sixteenth-century translations of the *Paraphrases* in English. Those essays should prove useful to readers of this volume. At a later date, a full introduction to the New Testament scholarship of Erasmus will appear in a volume prolegomenous to the series (CWE 41).

Certain Erasmian themes and common techniques of paraphrasing are to be found in all the paraphrases on the Gospels, but each paraphrase has its own inherent interest. In the *Paraphrase on Mark* one may note Erasmus' efforts to address great problems in biblical theology: to explain, for example, the 'Messianic secret,' to discern the place of John the Baptist in the economy of salvation, and to affirm both the humanity and the divinity of Christ. Themes that may be perceived as more immediately relevant to Christian life and discipline in a community of believers make their appearance here, in this last but one of the paraphrases, just as they had done in the *Paraphrase on Romans*, the first to be written: the importance of faith in a salvation won by the unmerited favour of God, the criticism of ceremonies, and condemnation of the abuse of power wielded through ecclesiastical structures. Further, Erasmus' interpretation of the biblical text in this paraphrase should arouse our interest, particularly in the light of the strongly contextual, grammatical, and historical method he prefers in the *Annotations*. For in the *Paraphrase on Mark* Erasmus frequently expounds the text tropologically, finding contemporary relevance in the gospel through the application of a methodology implied by the medieval notion of the 'senses' of Scripture. Indeed, Erika Rummel's notes in this volume offer convincing testimony to the degree to which Erasmus was heir to patristic and medieval exegesis. At points the homiletical character of the paraphrase may seem obtrusive, and it raises sharply the problem of persona: the identity of the historical author of the

gospel fades, and the voice of Erasmus can be heard distinctly. Erasmus' critics were quick to recognize his voice; here, too, the endnotes chart the course of the debates that arose from the *Paraphrase on Mark*, particularly with Noël Béda. In short, this annotated translation of the *Paraphrase on Mark* makes accessible in English a text that reveals aspects of the mind of Erasmus that were highly significant at a critical period in his life.

RDS

Translator's Note

Mark was the last of the Gospels to be paraphrased by Erasmus. He undertook the task at the suggestion of an eminent friend – left unidentified – 'lest a gap in the middle of the work tempt someone to mix into the authentic text something of his own' (Allen I 21:3–5). Erasmus' readers may have looked for a loftier motive, but the same mundane explanation is given in Allen Ep 1381: 'I shall add Mark lest there appear to be a gap among the evangelists' (line 417). The reason for Erasmus' seeming indifference may well be the assumption then current that Mark was nothing but an abridged version of Matthew.[1] At least that is how Erasmus explains the paucity of patristic commentaries on this gospel: 'Having explained Matthew, they [the exegetes] thought they had explained Mark as well' (LB VI 151–2). Although Erasmus himself may have felt the same, his paraphrase on Mark is by no means a duplication of effort. On the contrary, we have here a splendid demonstration of the author's *copia verborum et rerum* – a rhetorical bonus added to the spiritual benefits of his work.

Erasmus had dedicated his paraphrases on Matthew, John, and Luke to ruling princes: the emperor Charles V, his brother Ferdinand, and King Henry VIII of England.[2] He continued this tradition by dedicating Mark to Francis I. Work on the paraphrase began in the fall of 1523 and was completed in November of the same year.[3] The dedicatory epistle (Ep 1400) is dated 1 December 1523, and the book, published by Froben in Basel, was ready for the 1524 spring fair in Frankfurt. Several reprints followed that same year (Antwerp: M. Hillen, Cologne: [E. Cervicornus], Strasbourg: J. Knoblouch); thereafter it became a part of Froben's complete *Paraphrases* (volume 1 of the folio edition, dated 1524; octavo editions of 1534 and 1535).[4] A comparison between Froben's first edition (1524), that of 1534, and the last authorized version (1535) reveals few changes and those, for the most part, insignificant. In the present version, which is based on the text in LB, only variants that have a bearing on the translation are noted.

In his dedicatory letter Erasmus expressed the pious wish that 'as your four names are joined with such symmetry in the one volume of the Gospels, so your hearts may be closely united in concord by the spirit of the gospel' (2 below) and develops this theme into an essay on the ideal Christian prince. Only towards the end of the letter does he comment on the purpose at hand, expressing satisfaction at seeing 'Christian literature, and especially the New Testament, studied so eagerly by every one, even laymen in private station, that professional experts in the Scriptures are quite often worsted by them in debate' (10 below). He concludes his remarks on the popularity of biblical studies with an aside on its commercial impact: 'anything written by anyone on the gospel is a very saleable object nowadays' (11 below).

Although the paraphrases are original compositions and decidely humanist in style,[5] they are at the same time traditional in thought, reflecting patristic and medieval exegesis. Over the years Erasmus had consulted a large number of scriptural commentaries in preparation for his New Testament edition. Among the exegetes of Mark Erasmus specifically mentions Theophylact, the eleventh-century bishop of Achrydas in Bulgaria, and the commentaries 'bandied about under Jerome's name, which should not be entirely rejected even though they savour as much of Jerome as a sorb-apple of a fig.'[6] Indeed, these two commentaries have left their imprint on Erasmus' paraphrase; in addition, however, he drew heavily on Bede, whose words he occasionally echoes.[7] The interpretations of Jerome and Bede could of course also be gleaned from the *Gloss* and the *Catena aurea*, and in at least one place Erasmus reproduces the sequence of interpretations given in the latter.[8] This does not mean, however, that he resorted to summaries instead of consulting the full text of patristic commentaries. On the contrary, he often questioned the value of medieval collections and lamented the fact that they had all but superseded more authoritative works.[9] It is more likely therefore that he consulted the *Gloss* and the *Catena aurea* to compare the quotations there with the continuous text of the original, a practice that can be documented for his *Annotations*.[10] Some of the thoughts developed in the paraphrase on Mark also appear in the commentaries of the medieval exegetes Petrus Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna (d 450), the African bishop Fulgentius (d 533), Rhabanus Maurus (d 856), Bernard of Clairvaux (c 1090–1155), Euthymius Zigabenus, the twelfth-century Byzantine theologian, and his contemporary Radulfus Ardens, as well as the French exegetes Hugh of St Cher (c 1200–63) and Nicholas of Lyra (c 1270–1340), whose commentaries were standard reference books in Erasmus' time. Since the last two are, however, frequently

criticized and indeed ridiculed in the *Annotations*,[11] parallels are more likely to indicate a common patristic source than a direct dependence.

Erasmus took an eclectic approach to his sources, passing over interpretations that merely served to demonstrate the writer's academic knowledge in favour of those that had an uplifting and hortatory character. Thus he ignored the medieval penchant for attaching mystical significance to numbers and abstained from the rigidly structured analysis practised by the scholastic doctors.[12] He sought a contemporary frame of reference by alluding to the vices of his age, but refrained from the caustic criticism and bitter diatribes characteristic of his other writings. His concern for the spiritual welfare of his readers is palpable and gives his paraphrase a devotional as much as an expository character.[13]

Among Erasmus' sources classical authors deserve an honourable mention. As a young man Erasmus had sought to demonstrate to critics of the new learning that classical literature, though pagan, could provide both rhetorical models and pertinent ideas for the expression of Christian themes.[14] His youthful composition *De contemptu mundi* is a case in point: traditional biblical thought appears side by side with quotations from pagan literature.[15] In his mature theological work, especially in the *Annotations*,[16] Erasmus continued to draw on classical sources, treating problems of translation and interpretation not only in the light of Christian usage but also in the context of pagan literature. The paraphrase, too, evinces Erasmus' classical scholarship. He quotes Seneca, Ovid, and Horace; he uses the classical paradigms for wealth (Midas, Croesus), faraway lands (Getes, Libyan sands), and filial devotion (storks).[17] Similarly, he draws on a Hippocratic maxim to describe perfect health, on Plato's *Timaeus* for an illustration of physical changes, and on Celsus for a description of the symptoms of paralysis.[18]

While these classical themes stand out in the reader's mind because of their seeming incongruity with a sacred text, biblical allusions are so pervasive that they form a continuous subtext. To indicate all allusions and to put them into their wider biblical context by cross-references is beyond the task of a translator of Erasmus' paraphrase. A special case can be made for passages evincing *contaminatio* – to use a classical term of literary criticism. In antiquity Plautus and Terence were reproached for blending scenes from different plays when they adapted Greek comedy to the Roman stage. Erasmus thought of the gospel as drama[19] and, like the Roman playwrights, combined scenes from the four evangelists' accounts. Thus his description of Christ's baptism in the paraphrase on Mark 1:9–12 is a seamless blend of all the Gospels. Elsewhere in the paraphrase on this gospel he relates such

events as Peter's receiving the key to the kingdom of heaven, the sending out of the seventy, the intercession of John's and James' mother, and the healing of Malchus' ear – scenes that are not mentioned by Mark but are supplied by Erasmus out of the other Gospels.[20]

The *Paraphrases* were, on the whole, well received[21] and proved less controversial than the *Annotations*, Erasmus' earlier exegetical work, which had involved him in numerous bitter polemics. Louis de Berquin, who had translated some of Erasmus' works into French, reported that the name of Francis I afforded the paraphrase a certain protection. Critics of his versions, Berquin wrote to Erasmus, 'had censured nothing in the paraphrase you dedicated to the king – you can easily surmise why' (Allen Ep 1692:73–5). Another Frenchman, however, Noël Béda, syndic of the faculty of theology, had no such compunctions. He criticized three issues discussed by Erasmus: church institutions (especially regulations governing fasting), the sacraments, and the relative importance of faith and works.[22] In each of these areas Erasmus was, according to Béda, approaching Lutheran positions. The University of Paris concurred with Erasmus' critic on many points. It censured a number of passages singled out by Béda, obliging Erasmus to formulate an official reply.[23] Both in his apologiae against Béda and in his rebuttal of the university's censures Erasmus confirmed rather than reversed his positions. Consequently he changed very little in the wording of the paraphrase, refusing his critics any satisfaction on that count.

In his attack on the paraphrases, Béda accused Erasmus of being unduly concerned with matters of style. In his opinion it bordered on sacrilege 'to introduce into a pious and humble doctrine the arrogance and blandishments of pagan literature' (LB IX 529C). Erasmus countered that he had in fact governed his style 'so as to be thought a Christian rather than a Ciceronian' (LB IX 530B). Indeed, Erasmus' concern was for clarity rather than rhetorical appeal; his verbal skills, however, allowed him to combine the two ideals and to express the evangelist's meaning in plain but excellent Latin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to H.J. de Jonge for his valuable advice, R.D. Sider for his many helpful suggestions, and the copyeditor, Mary Baldwin, for her assistance with the format of the notes. It should be recalled that work on this series could not continue without the generous assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

ER

PARAPHRASE ON MARK

Paraphrasis in Marcum

DEDICATORY LETTER[1]

TO THE MOST CHRISTIAN KING OF FRANCE, FRANCIS, THE FIRST OF THAT NAME, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

If to this day I have never taken advantage of your Majesty's most generous encouragement,[2] Francis most Christian king, the fault was neither mine nor yours. There have been many other reasons against it hitherto; and in particular it is the confusion of the age we live in that has deprived me of this felicity.[3] I always expected that in the long-continued storms of war there must be some quarter from which peace, like a spell of fine weather, would shine upon us. But never did I suppose myself to be one hair's breadth less indebted to your generosity than if I had already accepted whatever you chose to offer. Even now I am full of hope that the time will soon come when I may be allowed to establish what my feelings are towards you by more definite evidence. In the mean time, while that opportunity is slow to arrive, I have decided to send you as a sort of pledge of this commitment my paraphrase on the Gospel of St Mark. Disposed as I was to accept this idea, I was spurred on like a willing horse already in motion by the perfect symmetry of the plan. Matthew I had dedicated to my own prince, Charles; John, which I expounded immediately after Matthew, to Charles' brother Ferdinand; Luke, my third target, to the king of England;[4] Mark seemed left for you, so that the four Gospels might be devoted to the four leading monarchs in the world today. I only wish that as your four names are joined with such symmetry in the one volume of the Gospels, so your hearts may be closely united in concord by the spirit of the gospel!

Some people credit the Roman pontiff with dominion even over the nether regions and some think he can command the angels; I am so far from grudging him this authority that I wish it were wider still. But oh that the world might feel the life-giving virtue of this power of his in the establishment and maintenance of concord between kings! – those kings who have so long put Christendom in extreme peril by conflicts with one another which are as dishonourable as they are disastrous. We execrate and revile the Turks continually; yet what more agreeable spectacle could be set before the Turks – or any nation, if one exists, which hates the name of Christian even more –

than the sight of the three most prosperous monarchs of all Europe engaged in suicidal strife? I can hardly convince myself that any Turk could be so savage as to call down upon the Christians more evils than they inflict by turns upon themselves. Nor does any peacemaker arise for the moment with the authority to put an end to these godless upheavals, though there is no lack of men to encourage them and to pour oil, as the saying goes, upon the flames.

It is not for me to prejudice or promote the cause of any party by prematurely passing a judgment of my own. I know that every man thinks his own case most just, and I admit that when questions of this kind are judged he who repels an injury inflicted on him is usually given more support than he who inflicts it. All the same, I could greatly wish to see all Christian princes weighing in their hearts at its true value the immense profit that any of them will find he has made who has chosen to accept a disadvantageous peace rather than pursue the most advantageous of wars. Is anything more fragile, more fleeting, more fraught with calamity than this life of ours? I say nothing of all kinds of diseases, of accidents, mishaps, and fatal disasters, the pestilence and the lightning and the earthquakes, fire, flood, and other calamities past all measure and all counting. For among all the evils which torment our mortal life, none is more criminal, none does more harm than war; and it plays worse havoc with men's moral standards than with their possessions or their bodies. He who takes a man's life does him less harm than if he robbed him of his reason. Nor is war any less detestable because the greatest part of the evils it gives rise to falls on the heads of the poor and lowly, of husbandmen, craftsmen, and travellers. The Lord of all men, Jesus Christ, shed his blood no less for their redemption, despised as they may be, than for the grandest monarchs; and when we come before his judgment-seat, where all the satraps of this world, however mighty, must soon take their stand, that stern judge will demand a no less strict account on behalf of those poor unfortunates than he will for the satraps and the great ones of the earth. Those therefore who count the loss a light one when it is the poor and lowly who are robbed, afflicted, exiled, burnt, oppressed, and done to death show that they think it was folly for Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom of the Father, to have shed his precious blood that such folk might be saved.

And so I think no sort of men more disastrous than those who supply monarchs with the seeds from which war can grow; and the greater their spirits, the more easily are they imposed on. And greatness of spirit is ranked high among the virtues of a king. Such a spirit won praise in antiquity for Julius Caesar,[5] and by common consent wins it today for Francis. But there is a further point: nothing is more certain evidence of a truly great

spirit than the ability to overlook wrongs suffered. The valour of great captains of the past, who fought for power, not for their lives, has won them praise; but they and those who praised them were alike gentiles. For a Christian prince it is more glorious to secure the peace and tranquillity of the commonwealth by some sacrifice of dominion than to celebrate lavish and luxurious triumphs purchased at such a cost of human misery. So those who have implanted in the minds of monarchs a passion to enlarge their dominions have discovered nothing but a perennial source of war. No less destructive is the effect on the affairs of men of those who plant the seeds of resentment in the hearts of princes and persuade them that a king of spirit cannot fail to seek requital for some remark – which has perhaps been falsely reported or reported as more outrageous than it really was – by declaring war. How much more courage it shows to have regard to the public peace and overlook the insult! If this hurts, it hurts only the individual – nor does it hurt him if it is overlooked. And while in other fields kings may perhaps be allowed to relax their vigilance in one way or another – if indeed they may ever relax who have to be vigilant on behalf of so many – when it comes to engaging in wars which open floodgates to such enormous evils they must watch with all their powers to make sure that they take no rash decisions.

I say this, your most Christian Majesty, with no wish to strike the sword out of the hand of kings. A good prince has perhaps a duty to wage war sometimes, but never until he has tried all other courses and is driven to it by ultimate necessity. The Lord Jesus deprived Peter of his sword;[6] he did not deprive princes of theirs. Paul actually endorses their authority when he prescribed that those who professed the Christian faith in Rome should not despise the authority of princes, pagans though they were; he goes further, and will not have them deprived of tax or tribute or respect, because they are God's servants.[7] Does he deprive them of the sword who says 'For he beareth not the sword in vain' [Rom 13:4]? The teaching of Peter, prince of the apostles, is no different: 'Submit yourselves,' he says, 'to every human creature for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well' [1 Pet 2:13–14]. The Lord wished Peter to use no weapon except the sword of the gospel, which is the word from heaven, for this, as Paul tells us in Hebrews, 'is quick and powerful and more piercing than any two-edged sword, penetrating even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit' [4:12]. He who gives orders to put up the sword but does not take it away does more than if he were to take it. Why does he give orders for it to be put up into its sheath? Of course, because a shepherd of the gospel must not fight a war. But why does he neither tell him nor forbid him to lay it down? Surely because he wants us to understand that we

must not plan revenge, even when our strength is sufficient to avenge the wrong.

The shepherds of the gospel therefore have their sword, the sword of the gospel given them by Christ, with which they cut the throat of wickedness and lop off human greed. Kings have their own sword, which Christ permits them to use to strike terror into evildoers and to do honour to good men. The sword is not taken from them, but its use is delimited; they possess it for the defence of the public peace, not as a safeguard for their own ambitions. There are two kinds of sword, and two kinds of kingship. Priests too have their sword and their kingdom: for crowns and helmets they have the mitre, and for sceptre the shepherd's crook; they have their breastplate and their baldric and, in a word, the whole panoply which Paul,[8] that valiant warrior, describes in more than one passage as being theirs. 'Kings' who preach the gospel are called shepherds,[9] but also kings in the secular sphere are called by Homer 'shepherds of the people.'[10] Both priests and kings have the same end in view, though their mode of action differs, like actors playing each his own part in the same play. If each kind of kingship had its own sword always ready, that is, if they used the power entrusted to them as it should be used, we Christians (Christians in name rather than in reality) should not, I suppose, so often draw a godless sword to plunge it in the vitals of our brethren. What is more, while each kind neglects its proper duty and attempts the duty of others, neither maintains its honour or its tranquillity as it ought to do. When has a king more kingly majesty than when he sits in judgment and dispenses justive, curbs wrongdoing, settles disputes, and succours the oppressed, or when he sits in council and takes thought for the prosperity of the commonwealth? When, for that matter, does a bishop enjoy more of his true dignity than when he is in the pulpit, teaching the philosophy of the gospel? At that moment he is truly a gospel king upon his throne.

It was dishonourable for Nero to contend in the theatre with singers and musicians or in the circus with charioteers;[11] and it is no less dishonourable for a king to be immersed in low and sordid business that concerns his own private interests and is prejudicial to the security of the commonwealth. Again, it would be improper for a philosopher with his gown and beard to dance some part in ballet on the stage or carry hook and net in the arena, singing the gladiator's song: 'Not you I seek, 'tis fish I seek, why fly me then, Gallus?'[12] – and it is no less improper for a gospel king to wage war or engage in commerce, to mention nothing more discreditable. Why is it now possible to find a bishop who thinks it does him more credit to have three hundred knights in his train, equipped with artillery lances and guns, than to be accompanied by pious and scholarly deacons and to carry round with him

books of divinity? Why are they great in their own esteem through a display of those very things which those whose places they now occupy grew great by despising? Why do they find bugle and hunting-horn sweeter music than the reading of the Bible? Just suppose a king were to put off his crown and his royal robes and put on mitre and chasuble while a bishop, on the other hand, in exchange for mitre and chasuble put on crown and royal robe: would not this seem a monstrosity? If we are so much revolted by an exchange of the emblems of their rank, why are we not more disturbed to see them exchange their functions? Now if either king or bishop does anything in his proper capacity, he ought to have no end in view but the public good. Either he rebukes those who have gone astray or he corrects the fallen or he comforts those who are cast down or he represses the haughty or he spurs on the idle or he reconciles those who are at variance.

Such is the office of kings, but above all of those gospel kings for whom it is not fitting to aspire to a kingdom of this world. And seeing that Jesus Christ embodied both types of kingship in himself, though while on earth he set an example only of the kingship of the gospel, kings of both kinds must try to imitate their prince to the utmost of their ability. He spent himself entirely on his own people; and how dare anyone live for his own advantage who claims that he is the vicar of Christ? All his life Christ played no part except that of saviour, consoler, benefactor. In the temple or the synagogues, in public on a journey or in the privacy of a home, on shipboard or in the wilderness it was all one: he taught the multitude, healed the sick, cleansed lepers, restored those sick of the palsy, the maimed, and the blind, cast our evil spirits, raised the dead, rescued those in peril, fed the hungry, confuted the Pharisees, was a father to his disciples and to the sinful woman so lavish of her precious ointment,[13] comforted the sinful Canaanite woman[14] and the woman taken in adultery.[15] Survey the whole life of Jesus. Never did he hurt any mortal man, although he himself suffered so much hurt from others, and it would have been easy for him to take vengeance had he so pleased. Everywhere he was a saviour, everywhere a benefactor. He restored Malchus' ear,[16] which Peter had cut off; the slightest loss by others was too big a price to pay for his own immunity. Herod and Pilate[17] were reconciled through him. As he hung on the cross he promised salvation to one of the two thieves.[18] After his death he brought the centurion to profess faith in Christ.[19] This was truly to play a king's part, to do good to all men and hurt none. His is the example to which all princes ought to come as close as they can. And you, King Francis, more than any other should be inspired by your title of 'most Christian king' to follow Christ your prince to the utmost of your power.

Apart from that, what must be the effrontery of those who while

rejoicing in the title of vicars of Christ demand that great quantities of human blood shall be shed in defence, not of their lives and their positions, but of their greed and their pride! And this I say, may it please your Majesty, with no idea of criticizing any bishops or blaming them (and let us hope that none may arise who deserve such words as these), but to show wherein consists the true dignity of kings and bishops, in the hope that both may live and prosper because both recognize that dignity and maintain it as they should. Far indeed from doing their duty are those gospel shepherds whose business it was to reconcile kings at strife with one another and who instead went out of their way to set a match to the fuel that will blaze up into war. And yet, if ever there was a time for a good shepherd to seek the welfare of his flock with the loss of his own life, if ever the supreme Shepherd whose vicegerents they are should be their model, this above all was the moment to hear the call of duty, when such a sea of crime and misery threatens to engulf the world. In that great multitude of abbots, bishops, archbishops, and cardinals why does not one come forward to calm these great upheavals even at the risk of his own life? Blessed indeed are the last hours of a man who by his death has saved so many thousand lives!

Nothing could be more cruel or more inhuman than the single combats and murderous encounters of gladiators in the arena; and yet this spectacle in antiquity gave such insane delight that the vilest precedent left them by the heathen long survived among the Christians too, especially in the city of Rome, which had not yet been able to unlearn its ancient pagan ways. But for the abolition of single combat, as is recorded in the so-called *Historia tripartita*,[20] the credit must go to a certain Telemachus, one of those who because of the simplicity of their life as Christians, their passion for solitude and their flight from contact with the polluted crowd were in the old days commonly called monks, dwellers by themselves. With this purpose in mind Telemachus had left the East and come to Rome, where he entered the theatre and, when he saw two men in armour come forward, each bent on the slaughter of the other, leapt into the arena and thrust himself between the ferocious pair, crying: 'What are you doing, brothers? Why rush upon mutual destruction like wild beasts?' To cut the story short, while this man of God in his zeal was trying to save the lives of both, he lost his own life, for the people stoned him to death. Such was the value set by the raving mob on their favourite spectacle. And the sequel? The emperor Honorius,[21] when he heard the story, gave orders that the custom of exhibiting gladiators in matched pairs should cease.

Now consider how foul a thing was that gladiatorial show and how many thousands were brought by it to a miserable end, and you will understand how much the world owes to the death of that one man. For this

action Telemachus was rightly added to the canon of the saints. But how much more justly would this honour be due to anyone who should separate the world's greatest monarchs when they are locked in conflict one with another! For it is no great loss if gladiator kills gladiator and one criminal acts in his turn as the executioner of another. And yet, while this conflict between princes brings the greatest evils on the whole world, the danger attendant on separating them is less than it was for him who stood between the gladiators. First, because they are Christian princes, and the more noble their temper, the readier they are to comply if some bishop or a person exercising in some other way the authority of the gospel talks to them in the language of truth and reason. Should one by mischance have to deal with a prince who will not listen and flies into a rage, the worst of all the evils that the greatest cruelty can inflict is death. And where, pray, will the successors of the apostles give us an example of the apostolic spirit, if not here?

'What good shall I do,' someone may say, 'if I die without achieving what I have set my heart on?' Christ, who lays down the rules of the game, will not let this heroic player lose his reward. Not but what death often achieves what life could not; for the end of a good man can have a great effect. I will not now repeat examples from antiquity, which are past counting. In England St Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury,[22] asserted the liberty of the church in a case of no great importance against the king whom he had long served and by whose favour he had received that dignity as a reward for his length of service. There was no question of reconciling princes at variance – though that century witnessed no princes whose dominions were as widespread as those of the men who nowdays have been disputing for so many years among themselves and draw other and lesser princes with them into the infectious plague of war. The only question at issue was a country retreat more suited to a man of God than to a king. The place is called Ortford.[23] Nor should I have found it very attractive before William Warham,[24] the present archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, a worthy successor on many grounds to that most famous man, had built there on such a scale that he seemed not so much to have restored an old house as to have raised a new one from the ground, so little did he leave of the old palace beyond the walls of some hall or other and of the church. Thus the objects of the dispute were of little importance; but though that saintly man did all he could, he achieved nothing by it all during his life. His death, however, gave to the priests in the country so much authority and brought them such piles of wealth that this has made them seriously unpopular in our own day. St John was beheaded for speaking his mind; but not all princes are like Herod and not all have a wife like Herodias.[25] Ambrose, bishop of Milan, had the courage to turn the emperor Theodosius away from the door of his

church on account of the cruel and hasty sentence he had passed on the people of Salonica,[26] and after rebuking him severely and instructing him to make amends he dared reduce him to the rank of penitent.[27] So the majesty of that great prince yielded to a prelate's authority. Babylas, bishop of Antioch, attempted to do the same to a king who was stained with the blood of an innocent man, and was put to death for it;[28] but after his death he began to be an object of fear not only to a pagan emperor but to the devils who in those days were still worshipped as gods.[29]

For my part, O best of monarchs, I have such confidence in the emperor Charles and you and the king of England, with your noble natures, as leaves no room for doubt that you would all have followed sound policies long ago had some counsellor arisen in whom a proper respect and freedom of speech could be combined. And all the time there is an immense supply everywhere of those who rouse the spirit of princes to make war, which means those who find it to their personal advantage that the affairs of men should be in turmoil. One of them suggests, 'This prince despises you,' 'Another has insulted you thus or thus'; someone else murmurs, 'If you can add such-and-such a province to your dominions, you will easily add that other whenever you please.' Misguided guide! Why suggest how far they can advance the limits of their dominions instead of reminding them how narrow are the limits within which the dominions they have now were once confined? Why not tell them how what they have can be better governed rather than enlarged? Of the extending of dominions there is no end. How true is that remark of Seneca: 'Many a conqueror has set back the bounds of other men's territory, none has set bounds to his own'![30] In any case, good government is the true test of princes. Alexander the Great, having reached the ocean, deplored the absence of another world; for his ambition this world was too narrow.[31] Even Hercules could not pass beyond Cádiz.[32] To our modern ambitions Cádiz is nowhere, the ocean does not exist. Against the poisonous counsels of such men as they the minds of Christian princes must be diligently fortified in advance by the decrees of Christ, the only antidote, and the ideal of the gospel is the target at which all their policy must aim.

You will ask perhaps why I choose a prince as busy as yourself to play my long and familiar tune to. Indeed, I could wish this tune had been dinned into the ears of every prince, and for no other reason except the torment I suffer from these worldwide and general calamities. I also have a passionate desire to see the state of Christendom more peaceful everywhere, and specially in France, which hitherto has been, I suppose, more pious and more prosperous than any other country. If only these catastrophes recurred more seldom, like floods, earthquakes and famines, things would be more

bearable. As it is, there is no end to struggles of this kind that shake the world. When a new sickness appears, physicians who deal with disorders of the body inquire with all their skill into the causes of the trouble. Once these have been identified it is no great business to devise a cure; and, not content with that, they devise measures to prevent subsequent outbreaks of the same plague. Why is it that in these great and constantly recurring troubles men endowed with the needful wisdom and experience do not investigate the springs from which these tumults break out from time to time over the world, so that it might be possible by cutting them off at the root to cure these dreadful ills? Why are we so clear-sighted in things of much less importance and blind in by far the most important field of all? It seems to me that most wars arise out of a few empty words, invented one might think in order to nourish man's vainglory, as though there were too little ambition in the world already, unless we fed with new formulae an evil which grows too fast among us of its own accord.

These and things like these are the roots of war; and when they have been grubbed up, it will not prove difficult to establish laws of peace between Christian princes such as can prevent these upheavals from sprouting afresh from time to time. In this way we should also secure an increase in the wealth of princes, in which their friendship would ensure that all of them had a share, and at the same time a Christian people governed by prosperous sovereigns would enjoy a delightful state of tranquillity. We should thus secure the blessing of the one true sovereign of the whole world, Jesus our Lord, and he would bestow prosperity on our affairs. We should thus become an object of terror to the enemies of Christianity, against whom we now have difficulty in defending what is ours, so far are we from driving them further away. True, I would rather see them set right than driven off; but how can we set others right when we ourselves are – I should almost say – more corrupt than they are? For I no longer judge Christians by the doctrines we profess in words; I judge them by their lives. Wherever ambition and the love of riches and pride and anger and revenge and a passion to hurt others are supreme, there I infer that the faith of the gospel is not to be found.

One further point. Although this pestilence has seized even upon those whose chief duty it was to find a cure for our disastrous state, yet I derive some encouragement from the sight of Christian literature, and especially the New Testament, studied so eagerly by everyone, even laymen in private station, that professional experts in the Scriptures are quite often worsted by them in debate. I find further evidence of the large numbers who now read the New Testament in the fact that, although the printers put so many thousands of volumes on the market every year, yet all those presses

cannot keep up with the eager demand of the purchasers. Anything written by anyone on the gospel is a very saleable object nowadays.[33] This medicine, which is so powerful, cannot fail, once taken, to produce its effect. And so the world now seems to me to be in the state of a man who is seriously ill and has taken hellebore[34] or some other effective drug; for his whole body is disordered and shaken and often seems very close to death. If only this gospel hellebore, after it has once purged and penetrated every vein in our hearts, might force its way to the surface so as to cast out the elements of evil and restore us in health and purity to Jesus Christ, and that, after such great upheavals and a disease which has left the world desperately sick, it might bring back that universal happiness and peace for which all men pray!

I should, however, have more hope that the prayers of all good men might not be in vain if the great ones of the earth took the trouble, like faithful physicians, to attend the world on its sick-bed, that is to say, if the monarchs on whose decisions rests above all else the future of human affairs were to remember that in a short time (what time in human life is long?) they must give an account of their use of their power to Christ, the supreme prince. Again, if bishops, divines, and monks would bear in mind that they are not the successors of Annas and Caiaphas,[35] or of scribes and Pharisees, who in an ungodly attempt to defend their own kingdom tried to suppress the kingdom of the gospel, who did their best to bury Christ's glory while maintaining their own, and while striving to make their own justice acceptable made God unjust;[36] no, they are rather the successors of the apostles, who even by the loss of their own life-blood rejoiced to maintain Christ's kingdom and his glory and his justice. Christ suffered once and rose again to die no more. But what he suffered then he suffers anew whenever the truth of the gospel is condemned, spat on, scourged, crucified, and buried. In a word, he considers as inflicted on himself all the evil that is inflicted on his members.

I have spoken perhaps with greater freedom and at greater length, most Christian king, than was reasonable, but it was the warmth of my affection that made me both garrulous and confident. As a Christian I wish well to all my fellow Christians; but towards your Majesty and the most flourishing kingdom of France I am guided by a very special feeling. Now I pray that Jesus, immortal rule of the whole world, to whom all power in heaven and earth is divinely given,[37] may grant his spirit to peoples and to princes alike: to princes, that all may live together under Jesus their common prince in concord and therefore in felicity; to peoples, that they may enjoy their new tranquillity under truly religious and flourishing monarchs; thus we may at length see gospel piety firmly established among us and widely spread, not by invading or despoiling regions that belong to others (for this

makes them poorer and not better), but by the preaching everywhere of the true gospel philosophy through men endowed with the spirit of the gospel and by setting such an example in our lives that the sweet savour of our religion may attract many others to profess the same way of life themselves. Thus was the kingdom of the gospel born and thus it grew and thus spread widely and was thus established, though for various reasons we see it now contracted into a narrow space[38] and almost done away with, if you consider how large the whole world is. Fallen, we must rebuild it; contracted, we must spread it wide; unsteady, we must uphold it, using the same resources by which it was first born, increased, and grew strong.

I write this in all simplicity of heart, Francis, most Christian king; I criticize no man, for I wish well to all, and I seek no man's favour, for I desire nothing from any man. Farewell.

1 December 1523

PARAPHRASE ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Chapter 1

It is natural for all mortals to seek happiness.[1] Thus far many men, distinguished for a wordly kind of wisdom, have promised us happiness – some by proclaiming laws, others by handing down precepts on upright living – but because they were human[2] they were not able to fulfill their promise. For they did not know what true human happiness is or in what things it lies. Thus it happened that they embraced a false image of happiness instead of true happiness and that they imbued others with their own error, being both deceivers and deceived. Lawgivers as well as philosophers, therefore, proffered a sort of gospel of their own, but one that was partly treacherous and vain, partly weak and ineffectual.

A more certain and solid gospel, however, was proclaimed by Moses and the prophets, but it was only for one nation and, out of consideration for the time, wrapped in figures and shadows. It merely prepared men for the recognition of the truth, and it was not effective enough to provide for their complete salvation, though it advanced them towards it by some degrees. Indeed, divine wisdom resembles nature itself, leading us by the hand, as it were, from the knowledge of visible things to the knowledge of invisible things. Yet the gospel of Moses and the prophets holds more terror than joyful promise. It revealed, rather than tempered, the wickedness of men; it impressed on men God's might rather than commending to them his goodness and mercy; it struck terror into their hearts rather than filling them with love. For after having learnt through the law that they were liable to sins and unable to refrain from them, and knowing at the same time that no one could escape the judgment of God, the harsh avenger, what was left for them but to tremble, fear, and despair? Yet, who can love whom he fears?[3] Although fear of divine justice is sometimes the first step towards salvation – just as bitter medicine convulsing a man's whole body is the first step

towards regaining health – it does not perfect human happiness. Grace and kindness bring about love. Love of God makes man happy.

When therefore the whole world had somehow been prepared by the oracles of the prophets and by Moses' precepts and figures, that truly joyful gospel was proclaimed in these last days, to be welcomed by all, freely offering abolition of all sins, not only to the Jewish people, but to all nations of the world[4] – and let no one doubt the faithfulness of this promise: it is God who proclaims it, not some human being. Nor is his emissary Moses or one of the prophets, but the Son of God, Jesus Christ himself, who has come down from heaven for the sake of our salvation and has put on our mortal flesh, so that, being innocent himself, he might through his death on the cross freely confer innocence and life on all who, trusting in his promise, set all their hopes on him. For God, who is merciful and kind by nature, wished in this manner to declare his supreme and inestimable kindness towards the human race – greater kindness one could not ask or dare to expect. He could not have sent a more distinguished emissary than his only-begotten Son; he could not have shown greater kindness than by forgiving all freely all their sins, however many and atrocious, on account of faith alone, and through his Spirit adopting those who had previously been the devil's servants into the company of his Son, through whom he has given us all things[5] that are in heaven and on earth. Since no message could be more joyful, it is with perfect justice called *evangelium*,[6] lest you fear a return of the yoke of the Mosaic law.

Now some preferred to take the gospel story further back, namely to the birth of Jesus Christ. I[7] was content, for the purpose of brevity,[8] to begin with the preaching of John the Baptist. For he preceded Christ's teaching, as the morning star precedes the sun, not by chance but by divine ordinance. John was to rouse the hearts of the Jews in the expectation of the Messiah's imminent coming, and when he came, to point him out[9] whose coming the prophets had predicted so many centuries past. For the same prophets who predicted the coming of Christ also made predictions about John, the precursor of Christ. For thus does God the Father speak to his Son in the prophet Micah:[10] 'Behold, I send my special and chosen messenger before you to prepare the way' [Mal 3:10] for you who will come soon to undertake the task of preaching the gospel. Isaiah speaks similarly, referring to John's preaching: 'A voice crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight' [40:3]. – Indeed, in the same manner the patient is warned before the physician's visit to acknowledge his illness and receive the visiting physician with respect, to comply with his wishes and to pay attention to what is being said.[11]

Therefore, when the time was at hand for Jesus Christ the Son of God –

who until then had not yet been made known to the world – to begin the task for which he had been sent from heaven to earth, John, according to the prophets' oracles, was playing the role of the precursor, baptizing with water in the wilderness. His purpose was not to wash away men's sins himself, but to invite them by his baptism to repent of their former life,[12] to acknowledge their disease, and to desire the coming of him who alone baptizes with fire and the Spirit.[13] Through faith he takes upon himself all sins once and for all[14] and, like a fountain, he pours heavenly grace from himself into the hearts of men, freely delivering them from unrighteousness, freely conferring righteousness, gratuitously freeing them from death, gratuitously giving them eternal life. Great is God's kindness, and correspondingly grave will be the punishment meted out to those who spurned it when it was offered. To avoid this, John led the way by his carnal baptism; by exhorting and instilling fear into them he was to induce them to repent and hate their former life and to admonish them that the Messiah and the kingdom of God were near.

John was not the light that would shine upon every man coming into this world,[15] but he was a messenger of the light that was soon to rise. He was not the physician who would take away sins and give health, but when the magnitude of the danger was impressed on all, he struck terror into everyone's heart. Preaching that he was near who alone could free them from their sins, he aroused in everyone's heart a desire for eternal salvation. John was not the bridegroom, but he was the bridegroom's forerunner,[16] who was to awaken everyone that they might go and meet him on his arrival.[17] He was not the word of God, but a voice announcing the word soon to be uttered. The Mosaic law held terror, such terror that the sons of Israel could not bear the voice of God speaking to them. John, on the borderline between law and grace,[18] like a mixture of both, had some of the old law in him, for he threatened everyone with destruction unless they came to their senses soon; he also had in himself something of the new law, for he did not call for victims or burnt offerings, for vows or fasting, but for baptism and repentance of one's former life, and he announced that the most merciful Messiah was now present and would freely forgive everyone all their sins if they placed all faith in him. The older law was proclaimed in the wilderness, and in this very place the beginning of the new law is proclaimed. He must leave behind everything who wishes to be worthy of the evangelical grace that lavishly gives everything. In the cities there are riches, pleasures, delights, ambition, and pride, but Jerusalem surpassed the rest: it had a temple which was its pride, it had carnal victims in which it trusted, it had feast days, sabbaths, choice of foods, and other ceremonies in which it vested righteousness; it had the arrogance of the priests, the hypocrisy of

the Pharisees. But he who desires evangelical baptism must cut himself loose from trusting in any of these things. Judaea must be abandoned altogether with its Jerusalem, with its temple, its victims, its priesthood, its Pharisaism. You must migrate into the wilderness to receive there the very glad tidings of the imminent coming of the Saviour.

Nor was John's cry in vain. Indeed many, terrified on account of his preaching, left their homes and hurried to the Jordan, coming not only from the whole district of Judaea, but even from Jerusalem itself. A mixed crowd of people came together: soldiers, tax collectors – and even some Pharisees.[19] And however many came were received and taught by John without respect of persons. And he baptized those who felt dissatisfaction with themselves and confessed their sins – as if he were by some image alluding to the pattern in the gospel.[20] For the first task is instruction; through instruction the catechumen begins to recognize both his own baseness and God's goodness and is wholly displeased with himself.[21] Then, realizing that hope of salvation is obtained from no other source, he takes refuge in the gratuitous kindness of God. To acknowledge one's disease is a large step towards regaining health; to recognize one's benightedness is a vast progress towards the light. The man who abhors his own impurity has advanced far towards purity of life. John's preaching foreshadows the catechism of the gospel; John's baptism represents the baptism of Christ.[22] John's readiness to receive anyone tells us that just as all stand in need of evangelical grace, so no one ought to be kept away from it, whatever his nationality or rank. The Pharisees had their own ablutions: they washed their hands when they were about to take food; they washed their bodies when they returned home from the marketplace; then they washed their cups, plates, chairs, beds, and the rest of their household furniture,[23] as if the purity God loves in us were vested in things of this kind or as if a little water used by the Pharisees could make a man purer in the eyes of God. Such forms of baptism do not make a man purer: they make him prouder. Blessed are those who have left Mosaic and Pharisaical ablutions behind and are hurrying to Jordan's cleansing waters. For 'Jordan' in Hebrew means 'river of judgment.'[24] He who judges himself is not[25] judged by the Lord.[26] Here is that purifying stream gushing forth from two sources: the acknowledgement of one's own injustice and the remembrance of God's goodness. Here is that baptism of penitence, that river of tears,[27] bringing forth from the heart's innermost veins a bitter stream – saltpetre removing all the soul's stains.[28] The Pharisees have their confession, too, but a proud one: 'I fast twice on Sabbath, I give a tenth of all my goods to the poor; and I am not like other men.'[29] The Jews confess other men's sins, not their own. Those, however, who prepare themselves for evangelical baptism neither know their own good deeds nor recount the sins

of others; they each confess their own sins. To recount one's own good deeds is a sign of pride; to report other men's evil deeds is a sign of spite and ill will; to acknowledge one's own wickedness is to glorify the goodness of God.

John, then, who preceded Christ's first coming just as Elijah is to precede his final coming according to Malachi's testimony,[30] lived in the wilderness, the more to resemble Elijah.[31] He utterly avoided the sinful company of men; he dressed in garments, not of silk or wool, but woven of camel's hair; he girded and bound his loins with a belt of skin – exhibiting something of the character of the gospel before it was proclaimed. Nor was his nourishment at variance with his abode and attire. His food – locusts and wild honey – was easily procured and readily supplied by the land itself. And in this respect, too, the herald of Christ took upon himself more than the Mosaic law demanded. Indeed the law made a distinction between kinds of animals;[32] John completely abstained from eating quadrupeds, fowl, or fish, and did so unbidden. The law prohibits the use of garments with wool and linen interwoven;[33] John forbade himself the use of linen and wool. Such a life was fitting indeed for the preacher of repentance who, though hallowed in his mother's womb,[34] nevertheless led an austere life lest his preaching lack weight if his conduct did not match his doctrine.[35] And by these means he had gained such authority and recognition among the Jews that many thought he was the Messiah. John, however, though being most beloved of God and endowed with many and divine gifts, nevertheless realized how great a sin it was for a man to entrust his salvation to another. Thus he preached openly before all, saying: 'I am not who you think I am. My teaching is humble and weak, my baptism ineffectual.[36] I myself am but a human being like you yourselves, conceived in sin. I am nothing but a messenger of him who will come soon to confer salvation on all. He comes after me in time and has less authority in the eyes of men, but he so far surpasses me in heavenly power that I, on whom you look with reverence, am not worthy to serve him as the lowest slave and, stooping to the ground, to untie the strap of his sandals. Him you must worship, him seek out with all your zeal. I teach about the things on earth, he will teach you about the things in heaven. I have thus far baptized you with water according to the body, preparing your minds for repentance. When he comes forth, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, whose hidden power hallows everything. For as no man has justice in himself, no man can confer it on another. He who offers that which is solely in God's power must be mightier than man. Recognize the difference between the unworthy servant and his Lord, between the attendant and the master,[37] between the herald and his king.'

After John had with such words roused the hearts of many to hope for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus appeared when his time had come, having left Nazareth, the small village in Galilee where he was brought up[38] and where he lived for a long time and which was therefore thought to be his birthplace also. This indeed is the nature of evangelical things: they progress gradually from the most humble beginnings to the greatest heights, whereas the works of Satan and of this world, after rising from magnificent beginnings, are suddenly hurled into the lowest depths. Thus Lucifer, installing himself in the far north and contemplating equality with the highest being, was suddenly hurled headlong into hell.[39] Thus Adam, on the devil's prompting seeking to become God's equal, was driven out of paradise. If you contemplate the greatness of Jesus at this point, you will admire his humility all the more. He came from a small, humble village, from Galilee, a region most despised among the Jewish people.[40] He went forth, a humble man without retinue, like one of the people, walking in the midst of sinners, soldiers, prostitutes, and tax collectors. He came to the baptism of penitence, he who purified everything. It was not enough for him to have been circumcised according to the law's commandment,[41] to have been purified according to the Mosaic tradition – he also sought John's baptism. Thus he instructed and taught us that he who would prepare himself for the task of teaching the gospel must omit nothing pertaining to any increase in piety and must avoid everything that could give even the slightest offence to the weak. John taught that the teacher must acquire authority, not by the splendour of his garment or the pomp of his life, but by the integrity of his character. Jesus, however, displayed a more perfect way and one further removed from Judaism, for he was no different from the rest in his clothing and food, yet he put John's authority into the shade by his innocence, his meekness, and his kindness towards all. For the grace of the gospel offers greater perfection than the austerity of the law.

Our Lord Jesus' whole intention was this: that the world should recognize him as the one and only source of salvation; that he should represent to us the type of the true and evangelical piety; that with regard to the past he should establish the credibility of Moses and the prophets; that with regard to the future he should shore up our expectations by a pledge, as it were. For we more readily believe the man of whom we think highly and on whom many witnesses agree. It was therefore decreed by divine counsel that our Lord Jesus should draw on testimony from all sources:[42] the whole of the law, all of the prophets, angels, shepherds, wise men, scribes, Simeon and Anna, John the Baptist, the Father, the Holy Spirit, and finally Pilate and the demons; and his very miracles, too, proclaimed him to be the Son of God. He did many things, not to satisfy his own needs, but to give us in himself a

pattern of life: for example, when he fasted, was tempted, prayed frequently, went to be baptized, obeyed his parents, patiently suffered injustice, and finally came to the cross. He performed many things that had been predicted in the prophets' oracles lest men should conceive some doubt about the promises being fulfilled thereafter: when for example during his baptism he had the dove alighting on his head or when he rose from death. He therefore came to John like a penitent man, sought and obtained baptism. He was baptized in the Jordan, where tanners, tax collectors, and soldiers[43] (no other kind of man is more sinful than they) were baptized as well – yet the princes of this world are not ashamed of their pride, which wants nothing to do with the people! None of the kings, none of the priests came to be baptized; and if it had pleased them to be baptized, a vessel of gold studded with gems would hardly have been good enough for their baptism. He who was the fountainhead of all purity, 'the king of all kings, the lord of all lords' [Rev 19:16], did not disdain this ablution, which he shared with the people: indeed, whoever lowers himself before men is raised up before God.[44]

Jesus was baptized like one of the people, but the heavenly Father set him apart from the others by a special and unusual sign. For as soon as Jesus had left the Jordan, which he had made holy by contact with his holy body, and had returned to dry ground, and while he was concentrating on his prayer, John saw the heavens part and the Holy Spirit fly down from it and rest on the sacred head of the Lord. Adam's pride shut us out of paradise; Christ's humility opened up heaven for us instead.[45] A visible sign was displayed before our eyes so that we might learn what kind of souls the heavenly Spirit loved, what kind of souls he produced. The spirit of Satan and the world produces and loves arrogant, ambitious, and savage minds, but that heavenly Spirit loves modest, meek, and peaceful minds. For nothing is simpler than a dove, nothing more removed from war and rapine.[46] In the Lord was expressed in corporeal form what happens spiritually to all men who in sincere faith receive the evangelical baptism. The body is bathed with water, and the spirit is anointed with invisible grace. Moreover, the fact that the dove remained on the Lord's head meant that while other pious men are given the Holy Spirit in the measure of their faith and as the moment requires, there was a perennial fountain of all heavenly grace in Christ.[47] For the dove did not at that time confer on him a new kind of grace; it revealed the fullness of grace in him. It showed from what source all grace flows to us.

John, confirmed in his belief by such a clear sign received from the Father, did not hesitate to declare him the Son of God.[48] John's testimony on behalf of Christ had great weight with the Jews, but much greater weight had the testimony of the Father himself, whose voice resounded from

heaven, saying: 'You are my only beloved Son in whom my Spirit is well pleased.' For a wise son is his father's joy.[49]

That heavenly Spirit is neither faint nor sluggish; it is a fiery spirit and immediately reveals its power once it has taken hold of a man's mind. The human spirit is slow and slack; it contemplates nothing but what is humble and of this earth. Those, however, in whom the spirit of the flesh is already mortified and who are driven by the Spirit of God, soon proceed to braver and loftier deeds: to a contest with the unclean spirit, whom they do not hesitate to challenge. Indeed, they trust in the protection of the heavenly Spirit, who is stronger than all the forces resisting the gospel. Jesus, therefore, showing in his own person what he wanted us to do, was immediately after his baptism driven into the wilderness by the power of the Spirit.[50]

There he remained for forty days and as many nights in continual prayer and fasting. And during this time he was tempted by Satan, whom he weakened and handed over for us to conquer, even showing us the way of overcoming him.[51] For Satan is utterly defeated by the Spirit of Christ, he is defeated by incessant prayer, he is defeated by constant sobriety of life, he is defeated by the weapons of Holy Scripture. During this time Jesus kept away from all human comfort, living among wild beasts. He stood in no danger from the crowd of men, but he showed that the new recruit must flee the common multitude until he has tamed the flesh, defeated Satan, and acquired the true strength of the Spirit by meditation on the divine law and by devout prayers.[52] For some men it is safer to live among wild beasts with Christ than among men more harmful than beasts. Our Lord lived among wild beasts, but while he was without human attendance the angels were at his side and ministered to him. Those who reject all pleasures of this world have heavenly comforts at their side. For us Christ was baptized, for us he prayed, for us he was distinguished by the testimony of the Father and the Spirit, for us he went into the wilderness, for us he fasted, for us he was tempted, for us he was victorious.

At this point consider, Christian soldier, the pattern of your perfection. Instruction in faith induces hatred of one's former life and hope for purification. Guided by these emotions you hurry to the Jordan; there, through faith in Christ, you lose the stains of all your sins. Soon your prayers and those of the church are answered and you are given a new Spirit from heaven. Through him you are received into the number of God's children, indeed, you are grafted onto the body of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church.[53] In the mean time you must not be a carefree soldier. You have enlisted with Christ, the commander; you have renounced the devil. You have accepted the Holy Spirit as your stipend and largesse, as a pledge of

your reward – you must fight for the palm of victory. Victory does not come to the sluggish; you must take up arms lest the enemy who lurks everywhere find you unprepared and unarmed and overcome you. Directly the world will assail you, Satan will assail you, your own flesh will assail you. You must go on fighting to go on winning. And the battle will not end until your life ends. Yet the more often you defeat your enemy, the weaker he will depart from the battlefield and the stronger you will be.

When you have shown yourself a valiant fighter in this battle, then at last may you gird yourself for the task of preaching the gospel, if this is where the Spirit of God leads you. Even when he was still a boy, our Lord Jesus was fit for the task of preaching the gospel – the most perfect task of all – but he set an example to show us that one must not straight away and without thought rush into undertaking so sacred a task. The Mosaic law had its season. There was a time when the light of the evangelical truth dawned gradually and the shadows of the law had to vanish,[54] when the power of the Spirit came forth and the flesh gave way. Just as in the natural transformation of things the change is facilitated by an intermediate stage that has an affinity with both sides, so John stood between the carnal law of Moses and the spiritual law of the gospel[55] to facilitate the transformation of men from creatures of the flesh into creatures of the spirit. Earth does not suddenly become air; water forms the intermediate stage – it is gradually thinned out into the lighter element.[56] Thus, as long as John's preaching was successful – with John playing to some extent the role of the law, for the law, too, somehow leads to Christ – our Lord Jesus avoided giving the impression that he was competing with John and abolishing the law, which he had come to perfect. Thus he neither preached publicly nor manifested his power in miracles, except in a few; nor did he gather disciples, but rather acted as John's disciple. In this manner he taught us that one could not rightly play the master unless one had previously shown oneself an obedient disciple.[57] Later, when John was thrown into prison because of his frank speech, Christ became his successor, so to speak. For it is fitting that carnal things form the earlier stage and spiritual things the later; that imperfect things precede and perfect things follow. Grace imitates nature: grain grows first a stalk, then an ear, and infancy is followed by a more robust age. The ceremonies of the law draw to their proper end, yet in some way they outline Christ. The evangelical light beams forth, its only source being Jesus Christ.

He made his first public appearance in Galilee, for it pleased him that this light should take its origin and rise from the most despised part of Judaea.[58] Proud Jerusalem did not deserve this honour. She thought she could see when she was blind, and because of this she was the more incurable. Moreover, in these events – which occurred by no means

fortuitously – there lies a secret indication of things that are to take place. For what does John being locked up in the dungeon signify?[59] No doubt that the Mosaic law must be made to disappear when the bright evangelical light rises. What does the shackling of John mean? No doubt that what was carnal in the law must be restricted and freedom be released through evangelical grace. What does the beheading of John mean? No doubt that there was now present the true head of the whole church, which was to be gathered from all nations of the world. And what about Jesus preaching the kingdom of God in Galilee? No doubt, it alluded to the fact that evangelical grace would move to the gentiles from the superstitious Jews – who were embracing the old head that had been cut off by the gospel and who spurned Christ, the new head of the whole law. For in Syrian 'Galilee' means 'transmigration.'[60] Formerly grace lay hidden and ceremonies ruled the day; now they have been removed and Jesus has come before the people, being both the source and the herald of evangelical grace. Thus, according to the mystical sense, all who are willing to listen to Christ's preaching must depart from the old rites and desires to become fit for the new heavenly doctrine. Let the Jew abandon the conviction that he possesses virtue; let the Pharisee abandon the arrogance that comes from relying on works; let the priests abandon their pride in temple and victims; let philosophers abandon the useless aid of human wisdom; let kings and tyrants abandon their foolish reliance on wealth and power; let all gentiles abandon their godless rituals, their foul desires – let them listen to Jesus, the new preacher who does not teach human, but heavenly things. He speaks to all alike, let all alike listen.

Here it is worth while to consider how he began his teaching. The philosophers of this world give to their listeners, not what is most useful, but what will win them admiration for singular wisdom;[61] in the pursuit of fame their prime object is to contradict other teachers of renown. Our Lord Jesus did not want to abolish the authority of the law; he wanted to interpret what had not been understood.[62] He perfected rather than destroyed it; he did not refute John's teaching, though it was imperfect, but took his preaching from the same beginnings as John. One could think he was a disciple of John, whereas he was the master and author of everything.

And what does Jesus preach? What does the word of the eternal Father proclaim? They have abused the law of nature, which God inscribed in the hearts of all men. The wisdom of the philosophers has made the world more foolish than ever. The religion of the gentiles has so far been the height of impiety. The law of Moses with its shadows, its victims, and its terror has made hypocrites.[63] The law with its figures has made allusions to him, and the prophets in their oracles have predicted the coming of one who would offer perfect salvation to all nations. Because the fulfilment of this promise

was delayed for a long time, the world had, so to speak, grown deaf to it, but the Lord has not forgotten his promise. The time he had set in advance for this matter has now run its course; there is no reason why you should hereafter await other figures or dark sayings of the law, no reason why you should expect new prophets. Behold, the kingdom of God is here! Instead of shadows truth will shine forth; spirit will take the place of flesh; instead of carnal ceremonies true piety will rule; instead of Satan's kingdom the kingdom of God will manifest itself. There is no reason why you should hesitate, no reason why anyone should fall back on the resources of his own justice. By the standard of the Mosaic law there may be just men among mortals,[64] but by the account of the evangelical law all men are sinners.[65] Yet there is no reason to despair. Acknowledge your disease and accept the remedy. Simply repent of your former life and believe in the gospel message. You will hear glad and joyful tidings: free forgiveness of all your sins. There is no need for burnt offerings; only acknowledge your injustice and trust in God's justice. He will, without a doubt, fulfil what he promises through the gospel. Whoever believes in him who made the promise will be deserving of what has been promised.

When the Lord Jesus had roused the hearts of the Jews with words of this kind and had won them over to the philosophy of the gospel, he too, after the example of John, began to gather some disciples – but only a few, and they were humble and unlearned men, so that when all nations of the world had been converted by them it would be truly evident that the kingdom was of God, not of this world. Then, when he was passing along Lake Galilee one day, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew working together, casting their nets into the lake – for they were fishermen and made their living by this craft. The lowliness of their craft brought them glory. The concord of the brothers denoted the consensus of the church. Their fishing was a type of the evangelical task, for through the word of God it draws mortals immersed in the darkness of ignorance and sordid cares of this world to the light of truth and the love of heavenly things.[66] Those catchers of fish, then, Jesus caught first.[67] 'Come,' he said, 'and follow me, for I shall turn you into fishers of men.' Hearing his words, the two brothers left their nets on the spot, and without hesitation followed the Lord Jesus. For the voice of Jesus held a heavenly charm. And when the Lord had gone a little further he saw two other men, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother. They too were in a boat, mending their nets in preparation for fishing. They too were occupied with other things as Jesus addressed them suddenly with his call and bade them follow him. And this is the sign by which you may recognize the young men's evangelical faith: They did not hesitate, but left their father Zebedee and his hired hands in the boat and immediately

followed Jesus' call. From such beginnings the Lord Jesus gathered the princes of his church, scorning the scornful priests and Pharisees of Jerusalem.

Accompanied by this retinue Jesus came to Capernaum, a community as proud and impious as it was wealthy and flourishing. Here he began right away the task of the evangelist. For on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and publicly taught the Jews, offering them not the empty figments of the Pharisees, but explaining the true meaning of the law, which was spiritual, not carnal. Immediately the people sensed that there was among them a new teacher and a new kind of teaching. They saw a humble man surrounded by a small and humble retinue, but they admired his speech, which had an aura of divine power. For he did not teach insipid and petty rules in the manner of the scribes,[68] nor old wives' tales about genealogies;[69] his words had authority, and the greatness of his miracles added faith in the truth of his speech. Whatever is human appears barren when divine power displays its strength. And behold: immediately an opportunity to work a miracle presented itself.

There was in this assembly someone possessed by an unclean spirit. The unclean spirit could not endure the heavenly Spirit speaking through Christ, and he began to rail against the heavenly doctrine, crying out and saying: 'What business do you have with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to ruin us before our day? I know who you are. Indeed you are that holy one promised a long time ago by the prophet Daniel,[70] whom God has uniquely blest before all others.' The Lord, however, reproached him, either because the time had not yet come to declare openly who he was, or because he was not pleased with testimony that was true but extorted by fear and coming from a wicked spirit who was himself a liar and liked to deceive the human race – even when speaking the truth this spirit could not be allowed to gain a hearing with the people, lest anyone believed his future lies.[71] Jesus therefore reproached him, saying: 'Be still and leave the man. Thus you will better declare who I am.' And without delay the unclean spirit obeyed the voice of the commanding Lord and left the man, but convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice to make it plain that he was not taking flight of his own will but compelled by divine force.

And here was displayed the image of a man seized by the spirit of Satan. For is he not possessed by the worst demon whom ambition, avarice, jealousy, hatred, lust, and the other wicked desires have totally in their power? Men of this kind cannot bear the word of the gospel but cry out: 'What business do you have with us, Jesus? Have you come to ruin us?' For those whom the spirit of this world possesses believe that they are being ruined whenever they are forced to leave behind the things[72] in which they

placed their false happiness. Therefore they are troubled and torn apart, since on the one hand fear of eternal punishment calls them to honest deeds, while on the other hand the habit of indulging in bitter-sweet sins holds them fast and pulls them back.

But no kind of demon is so tenacious that he would not take flight at Jesus' command. It is a greater miracle to render an ambitious mind modest, a ferocious one patient, a lecherous one chaste, or a greedy one generous than to free the body of a man from an unclean spirit. Men, however, admire the latter more, not because it is more wonderful, but because it can be discerned with the bodily eye. Therefore the Jews greatly admired the fact that the unclean spirit had been cast out by a simple command. Their admiration was so great that they inquired among themselves, saying: 'What novel thing is this? We have never read anything like this being performed by the prophets.[73] They never drove out demons with a mere word. And what is this new teaching which is accompanied by such great power? He preaches the kingdom of God and he manifests the power of God, crushing Satan's forces. And he does not cast out unclean spirits with magical incantations or long supplications to God or with a great effort, but like their master and conqueror he commands them with a mere word, and they obey him, whether they will or no.'

On account of this marvellous deed Jesus' fame spread through the whole region of Galilee. And to make it apparent that there was in him an inexhaustible fountain of divine power, miracle followed upon miracle. For soon afterwards, when they left the synagogue, they went to the house of Simon and Andrew. James and John were with them. Now the mother-in-law of Simon was lying sick, gravely ill with fever. As soon as they had informed Jesus of this, he went to her bedside, took the woman's hand and raised her up; and at once the fever left her. And her return to health was as complete as it was unexpected. For the woman's strength had returned suddenly, to the point where she could do her usual chores, and she ministered to Jesus and his disciples.

Anyone who rages with a passion for carnal pleasures,[74] who lives in luxury, leading an indolent life, is dangerously ill. The woman lies ill – and once the first woman, lured by a tempting apple, began to labour under that fever.[75] Our flesh, which has desires contrary to the spirit, is our Eve. Blessed are those, on the other hand, whom Jesus raises up to the love of heavenly things by the touch of his Spirit, so that he who before was a slave to indolence, luxury, and filthy desires suddenly gains strength and, a new man, becomes a servant to chastity, purity, and sobriety. For by repasts of this sort is Jesus delighted and refreshed. Now imagine the house of Simon to be the church, where it is not fitting to show a slack spirit, but rather to be

fervent with evangelical strength. And yet sometimes the mother-in-law of Peter – the synagogue –[76] is lying ill there. For he belongs to the synagogue who, with a corrupt palate, still likes the taste of the insipid letter, still likes to savour the water of Pharisaical meaning and does not yet savour the wine of the evangelical spirit.

As soon as they were in the house they asked the Lord Jesus to raise up the bedridden woman. Let us who are in the church also ask him to consider those who are full of fear, clinging to the letter of the law, addicted to ceremonies, with faulty judgment eagerly seeking out those things that are harmful and on the other hand turning away from the only thing that must be sought – to consider them worthy of his outstretched hand raising them up to the freedom of the gospel. This does not mean freedom to sin with greater licence, but to fulfil the duties of evangelical love joyfully and willingly, and to bring Jesus alive in his members.[77]

There is no time when the Lord is not ready to confer spiritual health on the man who prays for it. He loves even those who importune him with untimely prayer. It was already late at night, and the sun had set, so that it could seem impudent to call on the physician at this hour, but the desire to be healed overcame the feeling of embarrassment. They had brought a great multitude suffering from all kinds of disease, and among them also men possessed by unclean spirits. To see this sight, the whole community of Capernaum had come together at the doorstep of the house. Jesus, however, uncomplainingly healed a great many people afflicted with diseases of every sort and cast out many demons. He was a quick and ready physician, for he drove out sickness with a word. Then he silenced the demons, who cried out that he was Christ, rejecting testimony from enemies with whom he did not wish his people to have any commerce. He allowed the children of the Hebrews, he allowed fishermen to proclaim him, but he did not admit testimony from demons, even though it was true. For a wicked source harms the truth, and the liar does more harm when he has gained trust through speaking the truth. And this happened according to the historical sense. But today also we see many crowded together at the house of Simon Peter (which represents the church, as we have said), for Capernaum is a simile for the whole world. The sunset alludes to Christ's death;[78] the door of the house is baptism;[79] it is sought by repentance of one's former life and faith in obtaining salvation at the hands of Jesus. Sick men besiege the doors: tax collectors and sinners desire to be received into the fellowship of the church. But they are not worthy of salvation unless they believe that Jesus is both able and willing to confer salvation. When Christ, the light of the world,[80] was among the living, the church community was small, but after his death a great host of men began to gather from all regions of the world.

After this had come to pass, when the Lord Jesus, who had not come for the purpose of healing diseases of the body (which he himself sometimes brings upon his people to strengthen their spirit), saw that the multitude greatly desired bodily health but had no corresponding zeal for the heavenly doctrine by which the diseases of the spirit are healed, he rose at dawn the following day and, as if desiring rest, fled the crowd. Leaving Capernaum and going into the wilderness, he prayed there, thanking the Father for the benefactions he had decided to lavish on mankind through him.

And here we are given an example with more than one meaning: after conferring benefits on others, we must leave lest we appear to expect a reward from those whom we benefited;[81] then, sometimes, we must interrupt our salutary teaching for a while, the more to whet the mind's appetite; finally, we must invigorate the spirit by frequent retreats given not to pleasure but to the contemplation of heavenly things, that it may return more eager to help the weak. Not every man who has changed his abode has retreated into the wilderness, but only he who has called his mind away from the cares of this life to the contemplation of heavenly things.

When Simon Peter and the other disciples realized that Jesus had secretly gone away, they went after him until they found out where he was. For it is not fitting for true disciples of Jesus ever to be away from their Lord, whom they must emulate in all things. In the mean time, when the multitude, which had come together at the door of the house early in the morning, learnt that Jesus had gone away, they also followed him into the wilderness. Many follow Jesus, but only his disciples find him, and, having found Jesus, they show him to others. Thus they announced to the Lord that a great number of people from Capernaum was present and asking for him.

The Lord said to them: 'It is sufficient at present to have laid these foundations in the community of Capernaum; as for the rest, it is time to go forth also into the neighbouring towns and villages to preach the kingdom of God there as well. For I have not come to preach in one community, but to proclaim salvation to all.'

Thus the Lord Jesus travelled throughout the towns and villages in all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, dislodging diseases, and casting out demons, so that by his mighty deeds he would give the simple people confidence in his teaching. One day, on a mountainside, Jesus had taught the people many noteworthy things about the perfect conduct belonging to the profession of the gospel. As he descended, it happened that he met with a leper infected with a disease both loathsome and incurable, through which he displayed to the body's eyes the image of the invisible disease he had carried in the opinion of the listeners. The leper hated his disease and had conceived complete faith in Jesus: you see in him the penitent sinner close to

being healed. He was not afraid of the crowd,[82] even though he knew that he was hateful to them. He had before his eyes only the goodness of Jesus. He ran up to him, therefore, and fell down at his feet. What would a proud Pharisee have done in this case?[83] He would have shouted: 'Remove this detestable creature, that he may not give offence even to my eyes.' And he would have asked for a washbasin to wash away the man's breath. That is what a Pharisee, whose soul is more diseased than any leper's body, would have done. But what did our most kind Lord do, who alone was pure and without any blemish? He did not drive him from his sight, he did not remove him as he was lying at his feet. He knew what the man wanted but wished his extraordinary faith to be an example to all. Those who are in the grasp of lust, avarice, hatred, envy, and the other shameful desires, are covered with abominable leprous growth.[84] Let such men hear the voice of the leper that they may imitate him: 'If it is your will,' he said, 'you can make me clean.' He acknowledges his disease, he does not doubt the power and goodness of the Lord. As for himself, he leaves it to the Lord's judgment whether or not he is worthy of so great a favour.[85] He is ready to thank him if he obtains his wish and will not grumble if he does not succeed, saying: 'This man has the power to drive out leprosy, for in addition to all kinds of disease he even drives out demons; and he is willing to do so for he helps all wretched men everywhere. Yet so great is my unworthiness that I alone may not deserve to obtain what all the others have obtained.'

Such great faith joined with the most abject humility won him the mercy of Jesus. Displaying compassion even in his countenance to show us how we must feel towards sinners, Jesus stretched out his hand, touched the leper, and purified him with the words suggested by the man himself. The man had said: 'If it be your will, you can make me clean.' Jesus said: 'It is my will. Be made clean.' Genuine faith is not wordy,[86] and evangelical love confers favour willingly. As soon as he had said 'be made clean,' all disease left the man so completely that no trace of the evil remained.

The Mosaic law forbids touching a leper,[87] and its spiritual meaning is not without a salutary lesson: We must abstain from the company of the impure lest the disease be transferred to us by contagion. But the Lord Jesus is above the law.[88] Nor can he, who purifies whatever he touches, be defiled by contact.[89] He touched the leper with his hand and forthwith healed his body. Let us pray that he may touch our hearts with his word to cleanse them of impurity. You, too, must hurry to Jesus, whatever your sin – whether you are a fornicator, adulterer, or defiled by other diseases – for he is coming to meet you, descending from his seat on high: fall at his feet, prostrate yourself, conscious of your sinfulness. Call out to him, but call with deep

faith in your heart: 'Lord, if it be your will, you can make me clean.' Soon you will hear the voice of mercy: 'It is my will. Be made clean.'

When this had come to pass, the Lord did not allow the man to follow him, but commanded him to go away, telling him sternly not to speak of this matter to anyone. 'Go instead,' he said, 'and show yourself to the priest by whose judgment, according to the rite of the law, you have been proclaimed a leper; and if he pronounces you truly free from leprosy, offer the sacrifice prescribed by Moses for those who had the good fortune to rid themselves of leprosy.[90] Thus you will proclaim God's kindness towards you with greater authority than if you straight away cry out before all that you have been freed of leprosy. For in this manner it will be evident even to the Pharisees, who misrepresent my good deeds, that you really were a leper and that you have been made clean without the aid of a physician or the law, by touch alone and by a simple word. And they will realize that one is present who stands above their priesthood, who can remove any type of leprosy, however abominable, without trouble while they pass judgment on leprosy with great trouble.' He left, a clean man now instead of a leper, went to the priest, was examined, and was judged to be free of all leprosy. And soon he no longer kept silent about the deed but made it widely known, giving testimony on Jesus' behalf in this and many other matters.

Here someone will say: 'Why did he do as he was told on one point and on the other neglected the Lord's instruction?' Because the first instruction concerned the verification of the miracle, so that the priest, being unaware by whom he had been healed, might pronounce judgment on his perfect health, which had been restored through Jesus; had he known the author of the good deed in advance of rendering his verdict, he would perhaps have misrepresented Jesus' good deed. But when the miracle had been confirmed by the verdict of the priest, it was to God's glory to divulge what had happened. Then why did Jesus command him to be silent about what he wished divulged?[91] To warn us, of course, that we must not seek glory among men for the good deeds that God works through us, for more splendid glory follows him who shuns it.[92] A magnanimous man confers a benefit without wanting thanks from the recipient, content to have helped his neighbour; but he who has been helped by a good deed is obliged to proclaim it the more zealously among all people.[93] Christ was in no danger of falling into thoughts of vainglory, but an example was set for us who are at great risk in this respect. Nor did that man neglect Christ's commands, but his immense joy upon having his health restored and an irrepressible love[94] for the author of the cure did not allow him to keep silent. And usually it carries greater conviction when we tell what we would have preferred

to keep quiet had not the matter itself forced us to divulge what is on our minds.

And what was the consequence of this man's testimony? Everywhere so great an opinion was formed of the Lord Jesus that now he could no longer openly enter a community, as he used to, because of the throng and press of people. Instead he was forced to avoid the cities and live in lonely places. Those who seek fame and profits from tricks and magical arts seek out the most populous cities. Jesus, however, in fleeing repeatedly from the crowd, teaches us what we must do. He who has the power to work evangelical miracles does not seek a large but an enthusiastic audience. In the communities many throng together merely to feast their eyes on novel sights. No one follows Jesus into the wilderness unless he is burning with an ardent desire for him. He who has left behind the luxury of the cities and follows Jesus through rough and pathless country follows him to his own great benefit. For he who loves truly follows the beloved through everything: through ignominy, famine, loss of substance, exile, prison, torture, and death. This is represented by the people who came from all regions of Galilee and hurried to Jesus' hiding place in the wilderness.

Chapter 2

Wherever you flee, true virtue is accompanied by its own glory just as the body is accompanied by its shadow.[1] For the truly good man cannot be unlike himself; and just as there is light wherever the sun's body moves, so there is a large gathering wherever true piety takes refuge. And the desert was no longer deserted after the Lord Jesus, the true light of this world,[2] had gone there. Yet the man who is endowed with evangelical power does not cease, as far as in him lies, to flee the popular stage, realizing of course, what a dangerous plague is thirst for fame. But at once the desire to help and do good calls him back, though he is reluctant; thus it happens that as a good man is driven from one place to another his good deeds reach many. Showing figuratively that one must keep away from vainglory and must always do good to one's neighbours, Jesus revisited Capernaum after some days, whence he appeared to have been driven by the importunity of the crowd who had besieged the doors of the house in which he was staying even during the night. Just as he ennobled Bethlehem through his cradle, made Nazareth famous through his education, and rendered Egypt blest by his flight there, so he adopted Capernaum as his native town, so to speak, by his frequent sojourns and his display of miracles there.

He returned there almost in secret, hiding in a house before his arrival

could become known to the people. But just as the sun cannot hide, so the Lord Jesus cannot go unnoticed. The rumour that Jesus was in the house, originating with a few, as usual, had already spread through the whole town. At once such a crowd of people came together there that not only was the whole house filled, but neither the courtyard nor the area in front of the gate was large enough to hold the multitude.

Blessed is the house to which Jesus has come and which he never leaves. That house is the church.[3] For Capernaum bears the image of the whole world, wherever gentiles live. Indeed, Jesus was thrown out of the temple in Jerusalem: the kingdom of God suffers violence[4] at the hands of the gentiles and with a certain violence does the common crowd rush in. Catechumens besiege the doors, greatly desiring to be let into the house of the Lord, 'thirsting and hungering after the justice' [Matt 5:6] of the heavenly kingdom. Jesus, however, does not exclude anyone from this house, neither the poor man nor the rich, neither the healthy man nor the sick, as long as he has a strong desire to hear Jesus. The Lord, therefore, teaching us that we must always think first of our spirit, then of our body, first shared with them the word of the gospel to heal their spirits of disease. Thus they do well who, when they are about to give alms to beggars, first give them a word of advice to improve their souls and then present them with their contribution. For the common run of men are wrong when they show a greater desire for things that are beneficial to the body than for those that are salutary for the soul. The Lord, however, by his example showed us that the more important part of man must be our first concern, for he first taught and then healed the sick.

Furthermore, while Jesus was still teaching and attending to the healing of spirits, there came some people bringing with them a paralysed man with all the sinews of his body so weakened by the disease that he was tied to his bed and carried by four bearers. Here you have the simile of a mind so undone and weakened by earthly desires[5] that it cannot rise to any pious deeds,[6] but is tied down by lowly and sordid cares, thinking no sublime or heavenly thoughts. Since the thronging multitude that besieged the doors and the courtyard blocked their way, they could not bring him within sight of Jesus. They lifted their burden up to the roof, which they had opened up by pulling off some tiles, lowered it by ropes and set the man, suspended as he was, together with his bed down at Jesus' feet. They had no doubt that the merciful Lord would come to the aid of the wretched man as soon as he laid those eyes of his on the paralysed man as he was lying there on the bed like a living corpse with all his limbs slack. Jesus had seen the wretched man earlier and was not unaware of the faith of his bearers. He could have told

them without interrupting his speech, through someone or other: 'Let that paralysed man rise, let him be cured at once and carry his bed back home'; but he wished to display the piteous sight to the eyes of all and declare at the same time the power such genuine faith in him had with God. The disease was incurable and already inveterate, the manner of approach was uncivil, and yet the goodness of the Lord, conjoined with and matched in greatness by his power, gave them firm hope.

When Jesus, therefore, had seen their uncommon faith, he felt the greater pity for the man as he saw him labour more in spirit than in body. There was no one to whom the man did not seem lamentable for lacking the use of all his limbs; but even more lamentable was his spirit, which was a slave to vices. Nothing more was expected than that bodily health be restored to the wretch, which in itself surpassed human power. But Jesus, delighted by such uncommon faith and wishing to heal the whole man, turned to the paralytic and said: 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

There were in that assembly some scribes whom instruction in Holy Writ had made no better, but rather more inclined to slander. And they had learnt from the books of the prophets and Moses[7] that it was up to God alone to forgive sins. For a priest did not remit sins,[8] he only acted as an intermediary before God, interceding for other men's sins and that not without offering sacrifice. As the scribes knew this very well they thought in their hearts: 'What novel words does this man utter? Neither Moses nor Aaron nor any of the prophets of old dared to speak in this manner: "Your sins are forgiven." Indeed, that man insults God by claiming for himself divine authority. The law commands some sins to be punished by death, others to be expiated by burnt offerings, others again by sacrifices, through the intercession of a priest: this man cares nothing for this sort of practice, forgiving all sins summarily, with one word, once and for all. What this man takes upon himself does not belong to man: only God can fulfil what this man promises.'

Indeed, the weakness of his human body that met the eye kept them from thinking of Jesus as more than human in any way. Nor did the people think of him in grander terms, but their simplicity gave them an advantage, for it made them less inclined to misrepresent him. The spirit of this world suggested such thoughts to the minds of the scribes, who held fast to the letter of the Mosaic law and were strangers to the spirit of the law. And they were the more intractable the more they considered themselves learned. We see here an example of what happens in the case of painters and singers who charge less for teaching a complete novice in their art than a man who has been badly instructed by another teacher. For the work involved in teaching

the novice would be simple, whereas in the case of the man who has been badly taught, the labour of unteaching would have to come first and would be more bothersome than the actual teaching.[9] But the scribes concealed their ungodly thoughts with a certain human slyness, fearing the people,[10] before whom they put on airs.

But Jesus, who wished to prove his divine nature by deeds rather than by preaching in words, turned to the scribes to show that nothing was so deeply hidden in the hearts of even the most astute men that it could escape his mind, which searches everything and perceives everything.[11] He turned to them as if they had addressed him with the thoughts they had turned over in their minds and said to them: 'Why do you ponder those slanderous thoughts in your minds? Why do you judge me by my weak body rather than by the facts themselves? Why do you not rather recognize from those things which you see with your eyes and which cannot be gainsaid that those things are true also which cannot be seen with the eyes? You are offended by the words "Your sins are forgiven"; you believe that they were said in vain, for you cannot see their efficacy, which is displayed in the mind. As for yourselves, while you have healthy corporeal eyes, the eyes of your mind are diseased. What if I utter a speech similar to the one before but whose efficacy could be proven before your eyes – would it not be fair then to believe what you do not see on the basis of what you do see? Nothing is easier than making a speech before men, nothing more difficult than making good your word. God, however, has equal power in word and deed. If the Lord has not given this ability to man before now, it does not mean that he lacks the power of bestowing it on whom he will. It has once been promised through the prophets that he would send his Messiah to carry off the diseases of the Israelite people and abolish their sins. Thus look not on this weak body, which is similar to your own bodies, nor on this garment, which lacks the adornment of phylacteries and embroidered hems, nor on this voice, which sounds no different from that of other men. Judge me by the facts. Anyone is able to say to a man in the grip of sin: "Your sins are forgiven"; it is equally easy to say to a paralytic in the grip of disease: "Rise, take your bed, and walk." You have heard one command and have misrepresented me, now hear the other, which you cannot misrepresent when you see clearly that deed follows upon word. This I shall do, not to display my power, but that you may realize that God has given to the Son of man, who now appears before you humble and weak, the power to remit sins with a word, a power that your priests never had. And this power he has not only in Judaea, but everywhere on earth. Thus, whatever he forgives on earth is forgiven in heaven, whatever he has not loosened on earth, remains

bound in heaven.[12] You have no reason to slander me; you have reason to congratulate yourselves if God increased his kindness towards you. If you say that God is unable to do so, you commit *lèse majesté;* if you say that he is unwilling, you offend his goodness; if you say he will not do what he has promised, you make him out a liar. If you do not believe in those things that are of the spirit and cannot turn your backs on matters that are manifest and can be seen with your corporeal eyes, you reveal your perverse and stubborn malice.'

Thus Jesus spoke and as they watched intently what he would do, he turned to the paralytic and said: 'I say to you, rise, take your bed, and go away to your house.' And he had hardly spoken, when the power instantly manifested itself; for the paralytic did not improve gradually or begin after some time to move with difficulty, but at Jesus' word he rose joyfully, as if he had never suffered from paralysis and, taking the bed upon his shoulders, walked out through the throng of men, displaying before all a strange sight never seen before: a man who just a little while ago had been tied to his bed like a lifeless corpse and had been carried by four bearers now moved about in a lively manner and happily and had strength enough to carry so great a weight by himself. They made room for him as he left, though they had denied him room when he arrived – each reaction being appropriate: that the crowd blocked his way on his arrival made the extent of his faith obvious to all; and that they made room for him as he left to walk through the midst of the crowd displayed the miracle to the eyes of all. The scribes saw it, but not only did they fail to mend their ways, their envy was kindled the more. All the others, however, who were present, being astounded by this strange miracle, glorified God, who had given such power to a man that by a simple word he could remit sins and take away an incurable disease. They confessed openly that none of the accounts relating the deeds of the saints of old, nothing among the deeds of the holy men whom they had witnessed in their own lifetime could compare with this deed.

Now sometimes, when we step back from the works of sculptors and painters, contemplating the several parts of their work, we keep noticing new points that escaped our eyes before; thus I think that it will certainly be appropriate to pause a while at this remarkable sight, examining its individual aspects with pious curiosity. Indeed, everything the Lord wrought on earth he did so that we might meditate upon it and choose for ourselves whatever is conducive to a pious life. This will be done with even greater benefit if we consider first of all what was displayed externally before the corporeal eyes, then what this image indicates must happen in our hearts.

Let us first consider the force and magnitude of the disease that the Lord Jesus drove away with a word. Paralysis with noxious fluids seizes and lames the body's muscles, which are our means of moving, so that the man who suffers from this evil has limbs that are of no use but rather an irksome burden to carry and therefore he appears almost like a living corpse breathing only for his torment. This disease is liable either to carry off a man suddenly or, if that is not the case, consume him even more cruelly by a slow death.[13] It is one of the diseases from which the physicians' art likes to keep at a distance as being incurable; or if it does attempt to overcome the disease, it struggles with it for a long time in vain and comes off as the weaker party in the end, especially if the disease has taken hold, not just of one or another part of the body, but of the whole. Moreover, the hopelessness of this man's illness is indicated by the fact that he was tied to his bed, no different from a lifeless corpse, carried by four bearers: indeed, the illness often takes away the use of the tongue and weakens the mind's strength. It appears that this is what had happened to our man, who asked nothing from the Lord, even though he was beset by so great an evil. Who is so hard-hearted that such a spectacle would not move him to pity? Who would not have considered him better off dead than alive in this manner?

And now apply your spiritual eyes for a while and consider how much more wretched is the paralysis of a mind whose entire power has been seized by useless concerns for fleeting things to such an extent that he is completely numb to all moral duty, that he has no hands to help the needs of the poor, no feet to approach Jesus, no tongue to implore the help of the Saviour;[14] who, like one dead to justice, is carried hither and thither by the verdict of his desires as if they were his bearers? What would this unhappy spirit do who is completely undone and so enervated by excesses, indulgence in pleasure,[15] and desire for fame and money, that he has no strength left in him to raise himself from his sordid cares to the love of heavenly things? He is completely bound to the unhappy bed of carnal desires on which he rests. Certainly there is no human power that can help him; only Jesus, with his almighty command, can rid him of the full force of the disease. This, then, is the physician we must approach, the physician for whom no evil is incurable, but we must approach him with great faith, which carries so much weight with the Lord Jesus that he came to the aid of this paralytic even on the strength of other men's faith.[16] Even though they asked nothing in words, they nevertheless urgently implored him by their deed. That imploring faith is what is primarily efficacious with Christ, for we see that, even in the case of human affections, we are most concerned when we realize that someone depends wholeheartedly on us and has put his

firm hope in us. God, however, requires from sinners neither burnt offerings nor gifts.[17] Simply acknowledge your disease and have faith in the physician.

Yet even this ability is given to you by no one but God. For when he has decided in his goodness to cure a man's paralytic spirit, he fills him with a wonderful dissatisfaction, such that he hates himself and even tires of his life. He sees in what darkness, in what vices he is entangled; he abhors himself; he would completely despair did not he who sent the vinegar of sorrow add the oil of good hope as well.[18] The thought of God's justice troubles the mind that suffers bad conscience; it threatens the vengeance his crimes deserve and holds out the vision of hell; but the thought of God's goodness recalls him from his despair. God does not desire the sinner's death, but his conversion and continued life.[19] The Lord Jesus, who restored nature, who did not abolish the Mosaic law but perfected it,[20] adapted to the common feeling of the people. When the potion administered by a trusted physician violently convulses the whole body, the more violent the convulsion the greater the hope of recovery, especially in a life-threatening illness. In the same manner the closer the repentant sinner is to salvation – Christ being the physician – the deeper his despair.[21]

Now consider that reverend irreverence. For according to the common saying, shame is a useless thing to the man who is compelled by necessity.[22] One kind of shame drives out another, just as one nail drives out another.[23] To conceal one's illness is a useless form of shame. This kind of shame is driven out by weariness of the illness and the hope one conceives of obtaining health: it no longer embarrasses the man to speak out about his disease, because it embarrasses him to be a sick man. What man affected by a grave physical ailment is mindful of modesty and shame? Do they not uncover even the most private parts of the body and allow the physician to treat them?[24] In the same position is the man who begins to acknowledge the shameful disease of his spirit. For what is more outrageous than to climb on the roof of another's house, throw off the tiles, make an aperture, and offer from above a repulsive and abominable sight for all to see? What would the proud Pharisee have said in this case? Of course he would have cried: 'Shame! Shame!' He would have reproached their impudence with loud abuse: they had acted against common law, had dug through the roof, broken into the private residence of a stranger, and with that spectacle of death interrupted a holy sermon as well as defiled the eyes of the listeners. He would have ordered the cadaverous paralytic to be carried away and would have washed himself from top to toe with water.

Yet those same men who were bound to offend the ostentatious

follower of Mosaic justice delighted the Lord Jesus because they displayed uncommon faith in him, so much so that he gave the wretched man his health without waiting for his prayer. First he takes away the diseases of the spirit, that is, the sins;[25] then he frees the body of paralysis. For just as some vices originating in the body in turn affect the spirit, so it happens not infrequently that the body contracts an illness engendered in the spirit[26] – as when desire, arising from the juices of the flesh, corrupts the spirit and, conversely, when evil turns back on the body, causing paralysis and epilepsy; or when envy, taking its origin in the spirit, wastes even the body. But only he can heal both components of a human being who has created them both.[27] Here we must also consider how great was the generosity of Jesus in forgiving the man's sins. For when he said: 'Your sins are forgiven,' he remitted all of them. There is no mention of past merits,[28] no demand for sacrifices or satisfaction. There is only mention of faith. It was sufficient that the man fell down at Jesus' feet. He has sacrificed enough who shows himself to Jesus in complete faith: no burnt offerings can be more acceptable to him.[29] That paralytic was wholly displeased with himself, having a bad conscience as well as being weighed down by a wretched physical disease. All his hopes were pinned on the powerful goodness of Jesus. Jesus made him whole because he had committed himself wholly to Jesus the physician. The man did not think how incurable was his disease; he thought only how powerful, how good was the physician to whom he was committing himself. But what hopes have those who close their eyes to their disease, who flee the sight of the physician, who even hate the physician and oppose him? If you are ashamed before a human physician or if you are somewhat distrustful, thinking that he will reproach rather than help you when he finds out about your disease – do not conceal your disease from Christ. He puts no one to shame, he heals all, and he heals freely. Then you, too, will obtain what the paralytic obtained.

What did he do? He took his bed upon his shoulders in a turnabout of things: indeed, he was now master of his desires whereas before he had been their slave. This is what carrying the cross means; this is what 'crucifying the flesh with its vices and desires' [Gal 5:24] means. Now there is no more need for the four bearers. He walks about on his own legs wherever Christ's spirit takes him. Nor does he go anywhere else but his bidden place. For what is meant by 'walking' but going on to better things through progression in virtue? What is meant by 'returning to the house whence he came' but acknowledging in what state he left there and by whose favour he was returning, suddenly a changed man? For it is the custom of Pharisees to spend their time in the streets or in the marketplace or in assemblies.[30]

The man who stays at home knows his own worthlessness,[31] and whatever virtue he has he ascribes entirely to the gratuitous kindness of the Saviour.

I shall dismiss you from this scene after first pointing out to you the persons in the drama. The paralytic and his bearers are emboldened by faith and obtain what they desire. Jesus, delighted with their faith, even without being asked, freely doubles his favour. The simple and unlearned people discern nothing special in him whom they believe to be a man; they merely marvel at the divine power. Only the scribes mutter secretly to themselves. Let us avoid the example of the scribes. Zealous for their own name, they try to obscure Jesus' glory. Let us be one of the simple crowd, glorifying God; and let us glorify God not only when by his mercy he takes away our spiritual disease, but also when we see others repent of their former vices through the kindness of the same Jesus.

After this extraordinary miracle had been performed by Jesus in Capernaum, he changed his abode again that he might benefit more people, and went to the lake. He did not withdraw from bringing salvation to men but, fleeing the incurable scribes, he caused by his departure a yearning in pious men. Yet a great number of people also came together by the lake, showing us that we must leave everything behind and follow wherever he goes. For there is no place where he is not the Saviour, whether he lives in cities, passes through villages and towns, dwells in the wilderness, climbs a mountainside, descends to the plain, or approaches the lake.[32] Seeing, then, that such a numerous throng of men had come together and being aware why they had hurried there, he taught them by the lakeshore.

And as he was making his way along the shore he passed a customs house where the officials usually sit who collect toll from those sailing by. There he saw a certain Matthew, also called Levi,[33] the son of Alphaeus, sitting by the customs house. For he was a tax collector. This class of men, though hateful to people everywhere, was considered particularly hateful among Jews. For they buy their office from the emperor for an unfair sum and mercilessly extort money from everyone to make more profit themselves. In this hateful manner they cause trouble for sailors and travellers, who sometimes suffer enough inconvenience from other sources.[34] And there were many among the Jews who said that they, a people sacred to God, need not pay tribute to the emperor, a secular ruler and a worshipper of idols. Hence it came to pass that they violently cursed the tax collectors who carried out the emperor's business for usurious profit. The Lord, however, who previously had reproached the scribes for their lack of faith when they grumbled about his miracle while the simple crowd glorified God, wished to

show once again that no one is further removed from true holiness than those who consider themselves especially holy. He called Matthew away from the customs house and told him to follow him. Instantly he was made a new man and left the profitable customs seat to follow Jesus, a poor man, so that he might become rich in the wealth of the gospel. The people did not all immediately marvel at this act, yet it was more miraculous than the healing of the paralytic at which they had marvelled a little while before.[35] For consider what complete paralysis he suffers whose spirit is bound by love of money; and it is well known how involved are the calculations of tax collectors. Yet this man was suddenly changed: he jumped up from his customs desk and, leaving everything behind, followed Jesus – a greater miracle than the paralytic leaping from his bed and going home. The Pharisee listens to Jesus preaching many things, sees him working miracles, and is distrustful and critical. The tax collector who has neither heard nor seen any of this obeys the simple word of Jesus.

And behold there was another opportunity to illustrate more clearly the iniquity of the Pharisees and the goodness of Jesus. Matthew, who was now a confirmed disciple of Jesus, wishing to commend him to a larger number and to introduce his erstwhile colleagues to the profit of the gospel, dared to ask the Lord to partake of a meal in his own house. Jesus acceded to his request, for Matthew had obeyed his call. Matthew, realizing that he had obtained a great favour, prepared a splendid and magnificent banquet that would suffice a great many – the disciples, that is, of whom the Lord had now gathered a number; and in addition not a few others who were then accompanying Jesus and were his 'shadows'[36] when he went to a banquet; also many tax collectors and even sinners, former companions and friends whom Matthew, unashamed of the kind of associates he once had, having now turned to another kind of fellowship, had called there. For he hoped that just as he himself had been called by the Lord, so many who had been his companions in sin and unjust profit would become his fellow disciples in the philosophy of the gospel, which lavishes heavenly riches on men. This hope he conceived from Jesus' well-known and singular clemency towards all.

It was fitting that the banquet was a great one, for it was the type of the church being gathered from the gentiles. For sparse and confined are the banquets of the Jews who follow the flesh of the law, while the spirit spreads out far and wide and accepts all kind of men. All love liberty, all need clemency. Justice belongs to a few. The Pharisees claimed it, although they did not possess it. When they saw Jesus dining with tax collectors and sinners whom they, supposedly holy men, did not deign even to address,

they went to his disciples, who were as yet simple and uninstructed and – they thought – easily led away from their teacher, and tempted them with their poisonous whispers: 'Why,' they asked, 'does your master – whom you follow after abandoning John, as being the holier of the two – why does your master eat and drink with sinners when sharing a table is the best indication of friendship? Has he not read that it is written: "With the innocent you will be innocent and with the schemer you will be scheming?" [Ps 17:26–7] Does he not realize that he encourages sinners by keeping company with them – men who might repent if they were shunned?'

When the disciples, being as yet raw and inexperienced, had no ready answer, yet clung to the Lord with simple faith, Jesus, from whom neither the Pharisees' secret words nor their hidden thoughts remained concealed, answered them on behalf of his disciples: 'Pharisees, why are you grumbling when I attend a banquet with those whom you think impious and abominable rather than with the priests, scribes, and Pharisees? Praise is given to physicians who, though healthy themselves, go to the sick when they are called. Am I to be blamed for going to those who acknowledge their spiritual disease and seek a physician? Men who are in good health do not find fault with their physician, saying: "Why do you visit so and so, why do you not visit us?" Indeed, those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but the physician's art must stand in readiness for those that are ill. Those who acknowledge their disease are glad that the physician is present. For you have seen in the case of the paralytic that I was given the power of taking away sins. You who think you are healthy and claim to be just have no reason to find fault with the physician if he does not attend you. This is why I was sent into the world: to take away the sins of the world.[37] I shall not foresake any man who acknowledges his disease and desires the aid of a physician. As for the man who thinks he is free from sin – if he is right, he has no need of my help, if he labours under a false conviction or if he has a bad conscience, yet conceals his disease, the physician would visit him in vain because he is incurable. For who can cure an unwilling patient? Indeed, if the physician does what his art dictates, it is unfair to reproach him. On the other hand, the cruelty of those is great who, though healthy, begrudge the presence of the physician to the sick. Nor ought my actions appear novel to you who profess knowledge of the law. For thus it is written: "I want mercy rather than sacrifice" [Hos 6:6]. This is what God has said through the prophet, indicating that the carnal justice of the law, which consists in abstaining from open sins and in observing ceremonies, must be abolished. He who does not commit murder, does not steal, does not commit adultery, he who rests on the Sabbath, fasts on the appointed days, and

performs the ablutions and sacrifices, is just before men. But God exacts a different kind of justice, which consists in gratuitous good deeds bestowed on your neighbour, in forgiveness, and in clemency. How far from this virtue are they who not only refrain from helping their neighbour but even envy him and protest if someone brings help to those who need it. This is the Messiah promised you by God: not one who surpasses in sacrifices, phylacteries, fasting, and long prayers the Pharisees, who give themselves airs with these things before the people, but one who is a benefactor to all men, a light to the lost, a helper to the oppressed, a comforter to the afflicted, a physician to those who have contrite hearts,[38] one who joins to God those who appear to be far away from him. Indeed, those who appear to be closest to God, he will declare to be the farthest away from true piety.'

With this speech the Lord Jesus stopped the mouths of the Pharisees and at the same time taught his disciples how they must behave towards sinners. We owe much to the malice of the Pharisees, since it sometimes provoked the Lord to explain the gospel doctrine.

Next, a number of John's disciples who were associated with the slanderous Pharisees approached Jesus. For they too had been seized by a certain all too human jealousy, because Jesus appeared to put John's fame into the shade, even though John's life and teaching appeared to be more severe than Jesus' and even though he had surpassed him in the number of his disciples. They therefore went to Jesus and addressed to him the slanderous question: 'Why,' they said, 'do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast often, while yours on the other hand do not fast?'

As this question was directed at him, not at his disciples, the Lord Jesus answered in a gentler manner than before when he had protected his disciples;[39] at the same time he taught us the charity of the gospel, which is meek in its own misfortune, but shows more concern in fending off the misfortunes of others. For the evangelical bishop must be meek and forbearing in dealing with the injustice brought upon his own head, but must with great zeal come to the aid of the community when it is in danger.

Therefore Jesus said: 'You, who diligently listened to John the Baptist, must remember him preaching that I was the bridegroom and he the bridegroom's friend.[40] It is right that there be no sadness when the bridegroom is present. Moses is a servant, not a bridegroom. Fasting therefore became him: it has an element of sadness and darkens joy. They rightly fast who remain in the synagogue, which is a maid, not a bride. They do not dwell in the bridegroom's chamber. But the free people, who are in the bridal chamber, cannot fast as long as they have the bridegroom in their

midst because the greatness of their joy does not permit them to think of sad things. He who does his duty for fear of punishment cannot be joyful; but the sons, who have drunk from the spirit of liberty and realize that they are the bridegroom's love and care, are not disturbed by anxiety, fearing that they might be sinning against laws that are prescribed for a time for men of a servile disposition, such as ablutions, sabbaths, choice of foods, clothing, feast days, and sacrifices. They trust in the power and goodness of the bridegroom who, without any of these things, can confer perfect justice. Spiritual faith takes away carnal anxiety. Charity, which sweetens everything, adds joyfulness. The bridegroom has his special food,[41] from which his companions cannot abstain. The food of the spirit is the heavenly word, the food of the spirit is the flesh of the bridegroom himself; the drink of the spirit is his blood.[42] Those who keep close to me wish for ever to be sated with such food; they who are in the bridegroom's chamber wish for ever to be drunken with such drink. But just as corporeal food does not confer justice, neither does fasting. In fact, it often happens that the man who eats is juster than the one who abstains.[43] Sad is the fasting[44] prescribed by the law, and for this reason it is less pleasing to God, who "loves a joyful giver" [2 Cor 9:7]. However, he who fears, he who is anxious, cannot be joyful. But he who knows that he has freedom in these matters and fasts voluntarily out of love fasts with joy and alacrity, not because he is ordered to do so, but because love moves him to do so. When my disciples have reached that strength of mind in which they are now being trained,[45] love will achieve more with them than the commandments of either the law or of John are wresting from you now. But they have not as yet attained this strength. They are still weak, for the presence of this body stands in their way. But there will come a time when the physical presence of the bridegroom will be taken from them. Then they will have acquired more strength, having drunk the Spirit from heaven, and they will not only fast, and do so of their own accord, but will perform even braver and bolder deeds willingly and joyfully. As this doctrine is of the spirit, it cannot be understood by those who grow old with Pharisaical ceremonies. And for this reason I have chosen simple and uneducated young men,[46] for I would waste my effort if I entrusted the spiritual and heavenly doctrine to minds very much occupied by a superstitious belief in carnal things.[47]

'Old suits old and new suits new. If you mingle them, you not only labour in vain but also make worse men out of those whom you are trying to improve. For it is better to continue in the old superstition than to take away fear of sinning and thereby invite men to sin freely when you attempt to lead them to spiritual freedom. For just as teaching a man filled with the false

conviction that he possesses some skill is more troublesome than teaching a man completely ignorant of the skill, so it is extremely difficult to instruct in evangelical justice men who are convinced that they have attained perfect justice on account of petty carnal observations. This indeed is the reason why I find fishermen, tax collectors, sinners, whores, and pagans more apt to learn the spiritual philosophy than scribes, Pharisees, and priests who place religious perfection in human ceremonies. John, who stood between the old and the new law,[48] tried to combine the two kinds of teaching. For he did not dare to entrust this vigorous philosophy to weak minds. And whatever is human, whatever is carnal, is weak. That which is divine, spiritual, and heavenly is vigorous and strong. Hence I have chosen as my disciples raw and unformed men so as to teach them that strong and robust philosophy. I do not give them rules of this kind[49] – eat this, abstain from that, rest at this time, work at that time, dress thus, do not touch this, do not handle that[50] – lest they remain weak for ever if they have once learnt under my direction to trust corporeal things of this kind. A mixture of incongruous things is useless. For no one is so foolish as to sew a new patch of cloth on an old garment he wants to repair. And why not? Because he can see that if he does so he will waste a new piece of cloth and make the rent in the old garment worse. Indeed, offended by the conspicuous difference between the patch that has been sewn on and the badly patched garment, he immediately tears off what he has sewn on: thus the hole in the old garment gapes more horribly than before.

'And no one is so foolish as to entrust new wine to old skins. Why not? Because he can see that it will be a double loss: the new wine, which is fermenting because of the vehemence of the alcoholic spirits, bursts the skins, which are weak with age; thus wine and skins are ruined alike. What, then, does he do to protect both wine and skins? He pours the new wine into new skins. In the same manner the minds of men who have grown used to the flatness of Pharisaical observances cannot bear the new wine of the heavenly and spiritual doctrine, but abhor it and turn away from it, seeking the taste of the worse wine to which they have become accustomed.'

These words of Jesus were no empty phrases: this the Pharisees themselves often proved by their own deeds. For one day the disciples happened to walk through a cornfield and it was the Sabbath, when it was forbidden to Jews to do any work. The disciples were going ahead; Jesus was following behind. And when hunger prompted them, they began to pluck the ears of corn, shook out the grain by rubbing it between their hands, and ate it. Now hear of the old skins being offended by the new wine of

evangelical freedom and calling for the flat taste of the Sabbath. Indeed, the Pharisees who accompanied Jesus, thinking themselves most just and seeing what his disciples were doing, accused the Lord on account of the actions of his disciples: for just as the goodness of disciples commends their teacher, so their evil deeds are usually imputed to those who have taught them. Therefore they warned the Lord, pointing a finger at his disciples as if they were doing something unlawful, violating the Sabbath. Their motive was to make him restrain them and thereby approve the Pharisaical superstition or, failing that, to give them a reason for slandering his person. The Lord, however, protected his disciples in a manner that rebuffed the experts in Mosaic law with the law itself and furthermore showed by his own gentleness who deserved to be reprehended.

'How dare you,' he said, 'accuse my disciples of wrongdoing when they are obliged by hunger to pluck for their sustenance a few ears of corn they happened to find, when the law itself, whose teachers you profess to be, records[51] that David, when he found himself in like need, committed an act that appears to be a greater violation of the sanctity of the law. Indeed, when he was endangered by famine he took refuge in the house of God and was not afraid, though he was a layman, to ask Abiathar, who was then the high priest, to give him the singularly holy bread called "showbread,"the eating of which was unlawful to anyone except priests, and lawful to them only when they were within the precinct of the sanctuary and offering sacrifices. Abiathar was not ignorant of the law's command, yet he was not afraid to give the holy bread to David and his companions, to eat in the holy place. If you do not know that this is written or do not remember it, how can you profess knowledge of the law? If you know and remember it, why do you, in a similar situation, excuse Abiathar and David and even approve of them, yet bring an accusation against my disciples as if they had committed a heinous crime? If, in the past, the rigour of the law gave way to the need of a neighbour, and that at a time when the law ruled with great power, how much fairer is it now for the ceremonies of the law to yield their place when love invites us to come to the help of a neighbour? Indeed, the law also taught us this: that we must "love our neighbour as we each love ourselves" [Lev 19:18]. Since this is of all commandments in the law the first and foremost,[52] why do you in your wrong judgment violate the greatest and eternal law on account of things that are petty and will not endure forever? There was once a time when there was no holy Sabbath. And there will be a time when each and every day will be equally holy to pious men.[53] But there has never been a time nor will there be when it has not been or will not be a sacred duty to succour one's needy neighbour. The law forbids us to kill: but

he kills who does not help the man he could save. That is an eternal law. The same law forbids us to remain idle on the Sabbath, for it would be a preposterous observance of the law for someone to let his brother die because he is afraid of violating the sabbatical rest, while on a Sabbath he pulls out the ass which has fallen into a ditch, undeterred by religious scruples regarding the seventh day.'

Jesus had set out these and similar things in clear arguments, but since they were devout to a fault, he added this general statement: 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. And the Son of man has come, not to ruin men, but to save them;[54] therefore he has power even to abrogate the Sabbath whenever man's salvation requires it. What I have said about the Sabbath must be extended to all other regulations of this kind. They were instituted for the time being so that a rebellious people should gradually become accustomed to obey God's commandments, that they might be led by the hand, as it were, through corporeal figures to an understanding of spiritual things. The man who, free from the tumult of evil passions, violates the Sabbath from a desire to help his neighbour, violates it in a pious fashion.[55] Fasting is a pious practice, but it becomes impious if what has been instituted for the salvation of man is turned into a means of destroying mind and body. To make vows is a pious act, but it becomes impious whenever a man, through his superstitious wish to keep them, is called away from things that are more closely related to true piety. A man who offers a gift at the altar is acting in a saintly manner, but the proffered gift is unholy if he has not been reconciled with his neighbour.[56] Thus colour and shape of dress are things that can be rightly neglected when it suits a man: for man has not been created for the sake of garments; garments have been devised for the sake of man.[57] In the same manner, food is provided for man's sake; man has not been created for the sake of food. Thus it is lawful to eat any kind of food when human need requires it. Indeed all those bodily things in which you place perfect justice – temple, victims, food, dress, feast days, fasting, vows, gifts – are observed in an unholy fashion if the welfare of your neighbour is harmed. And they are observed in a most religious spirit if those things that are carnal are overlooked out of love for your neighbour and you preserve in your heart what is indicated by the shadowy representation of corporeal things. Moses was the steward, not the author of such laws; the servant, not the master. Those who adhere to them with servile minds preserve with great superstition things that are of the flesh. Those who adhere to the Son of man, who is the master of all law[58] and teaches us to observe spiritually the regulations which have been prefigured by those carnal forms, are free from such Judaic[59] ceremonies.'

Chapter 3

Even while walking in the field the Lord Jesus rejected the Pharisees' unjust accusations with speeches of this kind, protecting at the same time his innocent disciples.

From the following we may clearly learn that nothing is more slanderous than the mistaken belief that one is godly. When Jesus entered the synagogue to teach the people there according to his custom, another occasion arose for the Lord to do good and for the Pharisees to utter false accusations, because there was present in the crowd someone who presented to all a pitiful sight, for he had a stiff and withered hand and thus carried around a dead and useless limb, and he was the more unfortunate because he used to support himself and his poor destitute family by the work of his hands.

O Pharisaical malice, keen-eyed when it comes to slandering the good deeds of Christ, blind when it comes to understanding the heavenly doctrine! From what they saw with their corporeal eyes they discerned his human nature; in his actions they did not see his divine power. They saw the wretched man and knew the merciful Jesus, and therefore guessed what was to follow.[1] Immediately they got ready to slander, not his disciples, as before, when they plucked ears of corn, but the Lord himself, who had protected his disciples. They therefore observed him who was by nature inclined to aid those in misery to see if he dared, with the synagogue as witness, to heal the man on the Sabbath; and if he did so, they would accuse him of violating the Sabbath when they had the crowd as witness to his deed.

That wretched creature asked nothing of him, but for the wretch to come within sight of our merciful Jesus was in itself a prayer. To make everyone more attentive to the spectacle about to ensue, the Lord called the man whose hand was withered: 'Rise up,' he said, 'and stand in the middle of the crowd.' Hopeful, he stood up. Then Jesus turned to the Pharisees, whose thoughts were not unknown to him, and said to them: 'Since you profess knowledge of the law, what is your opinion – which is a violation of the Sabbath: doing good deeds or bad? Saving or ruining a man's life?' The purpose of this thorny question did not escape them. If they had replied that, for the sake of observing the Sabbath, it was better to let one's neighbour perish than to neglect superstition and help him who was in danger, the people would not have tolerated such an absurd reply, one that was contrary to natural common sense. If they had answered that it was allowed, they would have deprived themselves of the right to criticize him. Therefore they decided to keep silent. Yet in this manner they revealed to the

crowd their malicious cunning, for when they were invited by Jesus' question to come to their senses, they obstinately persisted in their desire to slander him.[2] To make their answer easier Jesus proposed a question drawn from a parable: Who among them would observe the Sabbath so religiously as to allow a sheep to perish that on the Sabbath had fallen into a ditch? Who would not venture to pull it out? There was not a single man in that crowd who did not realize how much more important it was to care for a man's welfare than for a sheep's. For he is a murderer who allows a creature to perish when he might save it.

When the Lord had waited for their answer and saw that all the Pharisees – like conspirators – kept silent, not because they were ignorant of the truth, but because they were obstinate in their malice, he looked around them, showing in his very countenance the great anger, the great grief he felt at their incorrigible malice: they, who professed to be 'leaders of the blind' [Matt 15:14], had themselves hearts blinded by earthly desires, so that of their own volition they did not see the clear light of truth. For no blindness is more incurable than that of a man who is knowingly and willingly blind. They saw that a dumb beast could be pulled out of a pit lest it should perish – and that without violating the Sabbath – but they did not want to see that it was lawful to look after the interest of a man on the Sabbath. Thus, to teach us that one must not refrain from helping one's neighbour on account of the hopeless wrongheadedness of evil men, our most gracious Lord disregarded the Pharisees, turned to the man, and, as the people were eagerly observing the outcome of the matter, said to him: 'Stretch forth your hand.' As soon as his voice had been heard, the man stretched out his hand, which had suddenly been changed and could do any task as well as his other hand, which had never been withered.

Whom would such reasons not draw away from his error? Whom would such an evident miracle not rouse to glorify God? Yet all of this merely provoked the Pharisees to more nefarious schemes, infected as they were with the leaven of envy. Indeed such are the judgments of the Pharisees: for ever wrong. They value a beast more than a man, a garment more than the body, food more than life, body more than soul, human things more than divine, flesh more than spirit, man more than God. Thus nothing is more noxious than perverse religiosity. In the eyes of man the power to restore a man's withered hand with a simple word is thought to be extraordinary, yet it is a sign of much greater power and good will to restore the withered and decayed forces of the spirit. How pitifully withered, how deadened, how lacking in all compassion[3] is the hand of the man who, on seeing his neighbour in want, does not give him alms; on seeing him astray, does not

set him right; a man who does not help the oppressed and does not rouse the listless! Such men were the Pharisees, who would rather have mocked the Lord than be restored to sanity by him. Such weak members has the synagogue; the church of Christ on the other hand does not admit deaf, mute, blind, crippled, and lame men.[4] Whoever is subject to ills, let him come before Jesus and he will be healed. He will breathe his spirit on us,[5] and what was withered will come to life. Those who entrust themselves to the Lord with simple faith will return home healed. Those who trust in their own justice will be rendered worse by other men's good deeds. Those who are puffed up with a Pharisaical spirit show good will towards no one except themselves. They who have drunk the spirit of Jesus attempt only to do good to all men.

Indeed, as soon as the Pharisees entered the synagogue, even though they did not dare to grumble before the people, they plotted among themselves and made secret plans; they even called upon the Herodians to make their conspiracy more powerful – for no one knew this art better than the Herodians – and deliberated how they could destroy Jesus, although they saw that he was far superior to them in mighty deeds and at the same time could not be overcome with words. The Pharisees did not get along with the Herodians, but for the purpose of destroying the author of our salvation they came to an agreement. O criminal concord, O truly hopeless blindness! Of what use can the secret devices of human deceit be against him to whom nothing is unknown? Yet to teach us by his example that one must on occasion yield for a time to the incurable stubbornness of evil men, the Lord withdrew, lest they should be provoked to greater crimes, and once again retired to the lake. Jesus' withdrawal does not represent a loss to the gospel, but a gain, for if the Pharisees had not driven him away, he would not have come to meet the multitude of the gentiles. Thus after Jesus had left the invidious and narrow synagogue and had withdrawn to the lake, a numerous throng of people came together there from all directions to see him, not only from Galilee but also from Judaea and even from Jerusalem itself; also from Idumaea and from the regions beyond the Jordan, as well as from the places around Tyre and Sidon. This prefigures the gathering of gentiles into the church when the synagogue through unbelief rejected the gospel of God.[6] From all these places had come together a huge crowd of people who, roused by the rumour that had spread far and wide about the wonderful teaching and the mighty deeds of Jesus, had rushed to the lake. The Lord, however, who was kind and generous to all, did not keep anyone from his teaching and from the benefit of being healed.

So great was the eagerness of the multitude in their desire for health

that one pushed against the other, and they forcefully surged against Jesus, just to touch him, since even the touch of his garment could drive out sickness. And there was no distinction of persons or disease before the powerful, and at the same time benign, physician. Anyone possessed by any evil was immediately freed even if he was only able to draw near Jesus. And even today we see this happening according to the spiritual meaning; for from among the nations of the whole world how many men, suffering from all kinds of evil, have taken refuge with Jesus and are being healed by the touch of faith? Even the unclean spirits, on seeing Jesus, could not bear his present power, but fell down before him, crying out: 'You are the Son of God.' But Jesus would not bear to be proclaimed by unclean spirits and sternly told them to keep silent lest they reveal him before his time. He wished to be made known to the world through lowly and humble men. To them he said: 'He that hears you, hears me' [Luke 10:16]. But he did not want any credence given to unclean spirits, not even when they spoke the truth. For this business proceeded not by chance, but by divine counsel, and everything was arranged for our salvation by certain steps and advances.

When the multitude surged against Jesus, he gave instructions to his disciples to obtain a small vessel so that he could be safe from the disorderly and tumultuous crowd, who thirsted more for corporeal than for spiritual health and smothered rather than touched Jesus. Those who acknowledge their disease and approach him with sincere faith touch him and are healed; but those who rush upon him tumultuously, still in the grip of worldly desires, are irksome to him.[7]

Immediately the disciples, who were familiar with the Lord's ways, prepared for him the vessel of a purer church;[8] for Jesus is more pleased with a few pure and placid souls than with a turbulent multitude. Yet he withdraws in such a manner that he nevertheless teaches the multitude from on board ship. When you see Jesus teaching on board a small vessel think of him as a bishop preaching to a mixed crowd comprised of men instructed in the faith, men possessed by evil spirits, Jews, and pagans. Blessed are those who spiritually touch Christ. But they cannot touch him unless they are first touched by him. For all whom he has touched are delivered of all vices. They are changed from tumultuous to tranquil men and will be admitted to the ship of the church[9] to enjoy Jesus' company in perpetuity, always to sit at his table. The small vessel in which Jesus is present is too narrow for unclean men, though ample for those who have been made pure. The Lord had refused to be proclaimed by demons, he had fled the unclean and tumultuous crowd, and yet this was evidence that the kingdom of God had come, for worthy and unworthy men alike tried to enter it violently.

Then he obtained some prefects to be his helpers in the vindication of the heavenly kingdom, sufficient in number for the many nations that were soon to flock to the philosophy of the gospel from all over the world. For this is what the monarchs of this world usually do: they choose reliable prefects through whom they can secure, expand, administer, and safeguard their dominions. These prefects must be especially faithful, prudent, and industrious, but most of all, they must be acquainted with the king's wishes. Jesus, then, had often lowered himself to the common crowd to attract many men to himself, showing us thereby that the teachers of the gospel must do likewise; now he was ascending the mountain, calling men to the heights of evangelical perfection.[10] And he gathered around him, not just anyone from the multitude, but those whom he himself wanted and had chosen for this task. For he did not call wealthy men, or satraps, or priests, or Pharisees, or scribes, but men in private station, lowly and humble. Indeed, those men were worthy of following Jesus and ascending the mountain with him. From the mountaintop all the marvels this world can offer are looked down upon; there the voice of the heavenly Father is heard at close quarters, as it were; there the glory of immortality can be discerned. Those who have been called obey and come to Jesus on high. For no one can climb this mountain unless Jesus calls him. For he himself is the mountain,[11] and no one comes to him unless drawn by him.[12]

Here that 'king of kings, that lord of lords' [1 Tim 6:15] chose twelve prefects who, like faithful attendants, would never leave his side – but when the business of the gospel required it, he would dispatch them like personal envoys,[13] to preach what they had learnt from their king and to promulgate the edicts of their prince all over the world. But because they were fishermen, obscure men in private station, who had nothing regal about them, lest their authority be slighted when they promised the kingdom of God he gave them an additional power which no monarch of this world can give to his envoys: the power to heal all kinds of disease in the name of Jesus and even to drive out unclean spirits.

The first of the apostles was Simon, whose name Jesus changed to Cephas, that is, Peter, or rock, that we might learn from the very name that the chief principle of evangelical philosophy is immovable, constant faith. Next was James, the son of Zebedee, together with his brother John: to them he gave surnames that they might be called Boanerges, which means 'sons of thunder' in Syriac, declaring by the very omen of their names that they would once send forth from the evangelical mountain the thunder of evangelical preaching[14] throughout the whole world. It would stir up the hearts of all men and make them eager in their desire for heavenly things. Just as the sound of thunder comes from high above, so the voice of the

evangelical preacher utters nothing lowly or carnal, but speaks of all-heavenly things. 'Repent, the heavenly kingdom is near' [Matt 3:2], says the voice of thunder. Fear of lightning seizes everyone at this sound, but a shower follows:[15] 'Believe in the gospel and you shall be saved.'[16] Andrew, the brother of Peter, was the fourth apostle; Philip the fifth; Bartholomew the sixth; Matthew the seventh; Thomas, called Didymus,[17] the eighth; James, the son of Alphaeus, the ninth; Thaddaeus the tenth; Simon the Canaanite the eleventh. The twelfth was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord. Through these few obscure, illiterate, and powerless men it pleased the Lord to renew the whole world, lest human wisdom or power claim for itself a part of the merit in this heavenly business.[18]

When these matters had been concluded on top of the mountain so that we might understand that in choosing the dispensers of the gospel word we must not consult lowly private feelings, Jesus descended with his chosen leaders and they entered the house together with him, being now God's familiar friends and domestic retinue. In this manner it has been indicated to us that teachers in their sublime knowledge must not hesitate to lower themselves to the humble state of feeble men so as to win more men over to their Lord. Let us follow Jesus into the house in the same spirit, to see what is to be expected, for what task men ought to prepare their minds who undertake the business of preaching sincerely the heavenly gospel. The multitude had not ascended the mountain.[19] That distinction belongs to those whom the Lord has chosen for this purpose. But when he descended to lower ground, the motley crowd gathered once again. They pressed upon Jesus with such importunity to hear him and be delivered from their diseases that the apostles had no time even to take a meal. Nothing can be more gratifying to evangelical teachers than this sight: a people eager to be taught importuning the priests, a huge crowd of catechumens besieging the doors of the church, the basilicas being too small to hold the common people when the bishops preach their sermons.[20]

When the rumour of all these goings-on reached the ears of Jesus' family, to whom the infirmity of his flesh was known – whereas, being stolid men, they could not suspect anything about his divine power – when they heard that Jesus was travelling up and down the country with a humble and mean company, was drawing in his wake a multitude of people, was teaching novel and unheard-of things, striking down diseases and driving out demons, they attributed to madness what they could not ascribe to divine power in view of his weak body. They knew his mother and father, they knew the house and all household members, they knew Jesus himself,[21] who in other respects differed no whit from the rest of them – and they realized that what was told of him exceeded human power. Thus, being his

relatives according to human law, they considered it their duty to restrain with fetters a man who was not in control of his mind and possessed by some spirit. For they said: 'He has gone mad.' Those who spurn all earthly things, even life itself, and embrace the heavenly philosophy with all their heart appear insane to those who have a taste only for earthly things destined to perish.[22] The man who lavishes his inheritance on the poor is mad in the eyes of the man who relies on his wealth for the protection of his life. The man who on account of the gospel willingly suffers exile, poverty, prison, torture, and death in hopes of eternal bliss is mad in the eyes of him who does not believe that after this life there is another more blest one for pious men. The man who spurns the honours bestowed by princes and populace to obtain glory with God is mad in the eyes of those who are truly mad when they seek with bribes and fraudulent action, by hook or by crook, a kingship and high office that they will soon lose. The Lord, however, bore the irreverent judgment of his relatives lest his disciples be offended on hearing similar pronouncements from their own families – yet the irreverence of the Pharisees, who had witnessed such great miracles, was more manifest, for Jesus' relatives erred through crass ignorance rather than lack of reverence.[23] The Pharisees, on the other hand, who had come from Jerusalem, should have realized the meaning of these actions on account of their knowledge of the prophets, namely that what the prophets had promised was now at hand; and because of the outstanding godliness on which they prided themselves, they should have worshipped the divine power, whose salutary nature all were experiencing. Yet they reproached Jesus with blasphemous words, saying: 'What he does surpasses human power, but he does not do this through divine power, rather he has some mighty and special demon by whose aid he performs these miracles. He has in him the demon Beelzebub, the prince of all demons, and by his help he drives out less powerful spirits.'

The Lord pointedly refuted this impudent and blind blasphemy, for it was not so much directed against Jesus, whom they believed to be nothing but a man, as against God himself, whose glory they envied, ascribing to an unclean spirit the miracles that had been wrought by his power. The Lord refuted them even with the help of parables to make the matter clearer in everyone's mind. 'Since the whole realm of demons is inimical to the realm of God,' he said, 'how can it be that Satan drives out Satan? Unless perhaps they are in upheaval and wage an internal war, fighting under the same prince, so to speak, and driving each other out of their fortresses.

'If a human kingdom is on the verge of collapse when it is divided by internal factions (for just as concord is the best safeguard of a kingdom, discord ruins any realm, however strong and fortified), how can Beelzebub's

realm stand firm when one demon casts out another? Why speak of kingdoms? Nothing is stable when discord reigns; not even private households can last if the members are divided among themselves and hate each other. If, therefore, I cast out devils with Beelzebub's aid – as you falsely allege – it is certain proof of his kingdom's imminent fall. And once the devil's kingdom is destroyed what remains but for the kingdom of God to emerge? If, however – and this is the complete truth – I use God's power to cast out the demons who are his adversaries and the enemies of mankind, then it is quite obvious that the kingdom of God is now here and the demons are forced to yield to its power. For they do not yield willingly or by agreement. There can be no covenant between God and the demons. The war between them cannot end in a truce. It resembles a war being waged between eminently powerful enemies who are divided by implacable hatred; neither of them allows himself to be captured by the other unless he is overcome by force of war. For would any brave and spirited leader allow his enemy to break into his house, which he has especially fortified, unless the adversary has taken it by storm, has vanquished the leader, and thrown him into bonds? When that has come to pass, he will despoil his house and carry off the booty. When you see the demons being cast out screaming and wailing, when you see many men abandoning the sins through which they were serving the devil and returning to the freedom of innocence, why do you transfer the glory of God's victory to Beelzebub, who has been vanquished? Has Beelzebub, the enemy of mankind, changed? Is he now concerned with man's salvation? Is this not manifest blasphemy against God? Of this you may be sure: there is no kind of blasphemy that cannot obtain pardon from God (for the ignorance or frailty of our human nature leaves room for forgiveness). But the man who offends the Holy Spirit is an exception: he will never obtain pardon.[24] And he blasphemes against the Holy Spirit who is stubborn in his envy and attributes to the spirit of Beelzebub works that can obviously be done only by the Spirit of God. Error and ignorance are pardonable, but how can a deliberate attack on the goodness of God calling man to his salvation obtain pardon? The weakness of the flesh can be an excuse for blasphemy committed against the Son of man; to ascribe to Beelzebub, God's enemy, the power of God, which shines forth from the works themselves and is for the salvation of mankind, is an unpardonable blasphemy.'

Thus spoke Jesus to them, vindicating his Father's glory, and at the same time neglecting his own, for he hinted that it was a more pardonable sin to think wrongly of him – as did his relatives when they said 'he has gone mad' and prepared fetters for him – than to act like the Pharisees who in their incurable malice attributed to the spirit of Beelzebub works which could not

in any way be misrepresented as acts unworthy of God. They could not yet understand the divine nature in Christ. For Christ had not yet wanted it to be proclaimed openly. Certainly God often worked miracles through the pure of heart by means of his Spirit, wishing thereby to be glorified among men. If someone attributes these miracles to Beelzebub's spirit, not through ignorance but through malice,[25] his wrongmindedness is past hope. They could have been pardoned if they had said that Christ was no more than a man, that he was no king, that he was no Messiah. Those, however, who misrepresented his deeds offended God himself and the Spirit, for the Spirit of God can operate through any man.

Now when they had seen so many miracles happening in such wonderful ways, when they saw that God was praised by the people, when they saw so many men cured, so many freed from unclean spirits, so many turned away from a sinful life and becoming zealous for evangelical piety, and all this through the effort of Jesus Christ, they stubbornly insisted that he had in him a demonic power, not the Spirit of God.

When the Lord Jesus with such and many other speeches had vindicated the glory of the heavenly Father in the face of the wicked calumny of the Pharisees, when he had reproached the obstinate and incorrigible unbelief of the Jews – for all sins are forgiven on the strength of faith alone – an opportunity arose to vindicate the glory of evangelical power even in the face of human emotions (to respect these is considered praiseworthy in other situations). For the relatives of Jesus came, accompanying his mother, and stood at the door because the dense crowd did not allow them to enter. But the word, going from mouth to mouth,[26] as it were, reached those who sat close to Jesus. They told him that his mother and brothers were here and wished to speak with him; for even among his kin and relatives some did not think highly of Jesus and a few even suspected him of madness, yet they thought they had a right, on account of their kinship, to call him at any time to speak with him.

However, to show us that the business of the gospel, which is carried on by the Spirit of the Father for the salvation of man and the glory of God, must not be interrupted by any human emotions,[27] the Lord answered as if in anger: 'Who is my mother and who are my brothers and my relatives? In this business I do not acknowledge kinship according to the flesh. The gospel has its own spiritual kinship which ties the heart with much stronger fetters than the physical bonds that link men.' And when he had looked around at the disciples who sat closest to their teacher he added: 'Behold these are my brothers and my mother. For just as there is a rebirth in the gospel, there is also a new kinship. For whoever believes in the gospel and in this obeys the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and my sister, and my mother

though he be a total stranger to my family and even my whole nation. Indeed, this bond is not measured by the degree of blood relationship, but by spiritual closeness. I do not acknowledge anyone as kin unless he has been reborn through his faith out of the heavenly Father and, like a true son, obeys his heavenly Father when he calls him to eternal things. Whoever shows himself most perfect in this, I will consider my closest kin.'

Chapter 4

Thus Jesus left this house (which bears the type of the synagogue),[1] in which he was assailed with blasphemous words by the Pharisees and interrupted by the importunity of his relatives, and once again sought the lake, as one longing for the large number of gentiles. Often he is driven out by the Jews, often he represents in anticipation the fact that the gospel is about to depart for the gentiles. For when he was dwelling in the house, that is, in Judaea, few adhered to Jesus, and those he called his brothers, sisters, and mothers. Many grumbled against him, many reviled him, many lay in wait for him, and his closest relatives interrupted his teaching. Jesus does not love such houses; he loves the multitude which, unlike the Pharisees, is not self-satisfied, the multitude which does not traduce him, as did his relatives who in their crass and carnal understanding interpreted heavenly wisdom as insanity, the multitude which does not interrupt heavenly endeavours with human emotions, as did his mother and her kin. He loves the multitude which, eager for the gospel message, completely relies on its trustworthiness.

Thus when the Lord Jesus had come to the lake and was teaching there as he had done before, a huge crowd of men came together once again – so that on account of the tumult caused by the crowd surging forward he was obliged to get into a boat; from there, as from a stage, he taught the crowd, which was tightly packed on the shore as in an amphitheatre.[2] Understand, O teacher of the gospel, what this image means. Flee the motley and unruly crowd, yet in such a manner that you do not desert your teaching duty. If there is danger of the press of business overwhelming you so that you can no longer teach, withdraw onto the little boat of the gospel which knows no earthly upheaval and from where you can teach the weak and uneducated multitude in peace. Do not withdraw far from the shore, remain close to it, adapting yourself to the people's limited understanding as far as possible: for they cannot as yet follow you.

At first the doctrine must be adapted to their uneducated minds, until they have made progress. Indeed, whom did Jesus teach from his boat but an uneducated and motley crowd of men? He offered them parables, that is,

similes drawn from things that are very familiar to everyone,[3] for this is the simplest and most suitable way of teaching uneducated men. At first sight it appears childish and laughable to those who are wise in this world. But this kind of teaching seemed good to the eternal wisdom. The philosophers with their convoluted syllogisms enveloped their listeners in a cloud of darkness. The orators with their marvellous abundance of words twisted the minds of men. The Pharisees heaped up abstruse doctrines far removed from the people's grasp. But Jesus chose for himself that simplest kind of teaching, which is a stranger to theatrical display[4] so that all the glory of the world reborn through the gospel would accrue to the divine power. Thus he inspired their hearts with many parables, so that they might receive the gospel word, from which springs our salvation, with simple faith and pure minds.

Because this must be engraved on everyone's mind, he bade them be attentive before he began teaching. 'Let him listen who has ears with which to listen,' he said. Unless one listens attentively it is a tale rather than a parable. Not everyone has ears to hear the evangelical parables, which are subtle in their simplicity, wise in their foolishness, lucid in their obscurity. For under their lowly and laughable garb they conceal heavenly wisdom. And it was not enough for Jesus that they pricked up their ears, for he also wished them to be spectators of his words. Truly blessed are those who have pure ears and sincere eyes for Jesus' words.

'Behold,' he said, 'a sower went out into the field to sow the excellent seed he had; and while in his desire for a copious harvest he cast his seed everywhere, it happened that some fell on the side of the public highway next to the field. Because of the hardness of the road this seed remained on the surface of the earth, and soon birds came flying, picked it up, and ate it. Other seed fell on stony ground. Because the rocks below were covered with only a thin layer of dust, this seed sent forth a shoot before its time, drawn by the temperate sky. Soon, however, as the sun's swelter grew intense, what had grown precociously was affected by the heat, and because the rocks were blocking its way and it had no roots to draw from the deeper layers of the earth moisture to protect it against the sun's heat, it withered before it could produce an ear of corn. Other seed in turn fell on land that was fertile itself but covered with thorns and briars. And when the thorns grew, becoming broader, taller, and thicker, it happened that the tender, newly grown blades were choked before they could emerge into the light, not because of a dearth of water but from lack of air. Therefore this seed, too, failed to yield fruit to the sower. Yet the labour of the sower was not wholly in vain, for there was some seed that fell on good earth. A shoot sprang up from it, grew, and ripened to maturity. Nor was any seed without fruit,

though the return varied. Some ears of corn returned thirty seeds for one, others sixty, and several a hundred.'

When the Lord had spoken thus, he added a warning so that his words would not be lost and that each man would ponder the meaning of the parable: 'He that has ears to hear, let him hear,' he said, indicating undoubtedly that not everyone who listened heard the message. Indeed, not even those twelve men whom the Lord had chosen and who were as yet raw recruits could quite understand what this simile meant, but they did not have the courage to ask questions publicly. When they were alone they found the courage to ask Jesus to be kind enough to explain to them the hidden meaning of the parable.

Warning us that we must not disclose everything to everyone, but that the gospel doctrine must be dispersed only at the appropriate time and according to the understanding of the listeners, Jesus said to his disciples: 'The princes of this world share their secrets with few, and only with tried and true men to whom they can safely entrust their plans; but from the common people they conceal whatever secrets they have. To you, whom I have chosen from among the people and who are my close companions, it is given to know the mystery of the heavenly kingdom; but for the people and those who have been excluded from the inner circle,[5] all is conducted in parables, whether I speak or act before them. For they do not have suitable ears or suitable eyes. They do not believe what they hear, they criticize unjustly what they see. Thus what the prophet has predicted happens to them: although they clearly see, they do not see; although they clearly hear, they do not hear, for they do not understand.[6] He who does not believe does not understand. Moreover, sins are not forgiven except in the case of those who believe that through the gospel sins are freely forgiven. Thus it is their own unbelief that keeps them from turning to God, for they themselves turn away from God; nor are they delivered from their sins, for they spew out the medicine by which sins are cured.' With these words Jesus denoted those whom he had previously depicted by the image of the earth that is barren for a number of reasons.

To render his disciples more receptive he chided their slowness. 'Can you still not guess the meaning of this parable,' he said, 'when it is easy to interpret? How, then, will you understand all the other parables when nothing of what I say or do is without a deeper meaning? I shall explain this parable so that you may become accustomed to the process and seek out the hidden and more abstruse meaning of the other parables by yourselves.[7] The field is the world, which contains many that are unsuited to the doctrine of the gospel. The sower is the Son of man, who has descended to earth from heaven. The seed is the word of the gospel, through which the will of God is

proclaimed to mortals. His will is this: that all should distrust their own strength and trust with all their hearts in the promise of the gospel, namely, that through faith all sins are forgiven to all men if, after recognizing the truth, they zealously turn to true piety. The seed that I said fell by the wayside denotes those who hear the word of the gospel in a trifling manner while occupied with other things, as if they were listening to some human tale. None listen with less profit. For as soon as they have listened, Satan comes flying and, sowing other thoughts in their hearts, takes out the seed before it has settled in their hearts, so that they no longer remember what they have heard. The seed that was caught up in stony ground denotes those who receive the word of the gospel with great eagerness and take it in with joy, perceiving that it is true and salutary. But since they do not store it in their heart through deep reflection – no doubt because other affections stand in the way, occupying the heart, unwilling to yield to the divine word – they do not persevere in what they undertook with eager joy and do not yield any fruit of evangelical piety, but only a short-lived result, for they have no roots. Thus it happens that they believe in the gospel if circumstances are favourable, and, like a shoot that has sprung up, evince good hopes, but as soon as adversity strikes and a storm arises on account of their profession of the gospel, they are immediately shocked and fall away from their purpose.

'The seed, however, that fell on thorny ground signifies those who diligently listen to the gospel word and remember it, but love of deceptive riches and desires for other things that entice them with the false appearance of being good invade their hearts and, growing day by day as it were, finally overwhelm the seed so that it cannot grow up to bear fruit.'

'Finally, the seed that fell on good earth denotes those who listen attentively to the word of the gospel, who believe what they have heard, and let it penetrate the innermost recesses of their hearts until it grows into a fruit worthy of the gospel, with varying results according to the variety of the soil and the temperature of the heavenly breezes, so that one bears modest, another a more abundant, and a third superabundant fruit, just as grain produces fruit, one thirty-, another sixty-, a third a hundredfold. The man who produces abundant fruit has reason to give thanks to God; he has no reason to be pleased with himself. The man who bears modest fruit has no reason to envy the more fortunate man. For God, who is not indebted or beholden to anyone, gives each man his gifts out of his own kindness and at his pleasure. Whatever the outcome, it is owed to him who first sowed the seed and through whom there grew up whatever came forth. I wish all cornfields everywhere on earth were seeded with this seed so that, when the time comes, this doctrine which I now impart to a few of you secretly might be

propagated by you as widely as possible; thus you too will represent the image of the good earth and transplant into as many men as possible what you yourselves have received. For no fruit is more pleasing to God. Therefore you must take care lest the seed that has been entrusted to your heart die by your forgetfulness or negligence; rather, you must diligently store it in your heart that it may spring up when its time has come and bear abundant fruit.'

So that this warning might be implanted more deeply in the hearts of the apostles, Jesus added this parable: 'Do not think that it is my wish to keep always a secret what I now entrust to you in secret. For who lights a candle to hide it under a bushel or under a bed? Who does not rather put it on a candlestick that it may bring light to all who live in the house? The word of the gospel is the seed which is entrusted to you so that it may come forth with much profit. The light has been lit in you through me so that by your teaching it may drive out the darkness of the whole world. At present I hide many things from the multitude because they are not yet capable of understanding, and even if they were capable, the time has not yet come. Truly, when the time comes, there is nothing so secret among us but it must be divulged; nothing so arcane but it must be openly preached to all. For at that time there must be nothing to deter you from the propagation of the gospel; everything must take second place to the task that will be your only business by day and by night. Woe to him who does not bring forth the good seed entrusted to him, who conceals the light given to him. Thus if you have ears to hear, listen to my words and remember what you have heard.'

And lest his words fall into oblivion Jesus repeated once more: 'Mark what you hear and take care lest you hear in vain; for you are not listening to human tales, but to a heavenly doctrine which, by your effort, must be spread throughout the whole world. Hand down in good faith what you have received, lest you teach something different from what you have received. You will hear my words with great profit if you retain them and zealously share with others what you have heard. You hear it at your great peril if you are struck by human fear or enticed by the comforts of this world and suppress what you have received.[8] Do not be sparing or lazy dispensers of the teaching I have imparted to you: spread it liberally, for your largesse will not diminish what you have, but rather increase it. A treasure of money is depleted by largesse; this heavenly treasure will be heaped up more abundantly the more liberally you distribute it. Unlike the man who is poorer for lavishing his wealth on the needy, the teacher of the gospel will not be less learned if he communicates his learning to as many people as possible. Indeed, just as he who carries the light at the head of many men does not for all that have less light himself, so the man who through the

teaching of the gospel opens up a path for all to recognize the truth is not only not deprived of the light he has but on the contrary is given more abundant light that he may benefit more men.

'What you have is not yours but belongs to him who entrusted it to you for distribution. If you distribute it in large measures to others, he who gave you the first lot will add an increment of like measure. God loves to have his gifts poured out and, unlike the common pattern in the case of human wealth, he becomes richer who has spent most lavishly. For this is how merit accrues: he who has given much adds a large increase because he sees that what has been given is being poured out for the benefit of many. Therefore let the man who has wealth give generously, so that he may have abundant riches himself. No one who is truly[9] generous rightly gives to one abounding in wealth; rather he gives to the needy. Here the converse applies: The man who has endowments does not have them for himself alone but imparts what he has to others; yet as a dispenser in good faith he will receive additional wealth so that he will have in abundance. But he who has no wealth – and the man who keeps a buried treasure in his house[10] has no wealth – will not only fail to become richer, but the very treasure that he thought he had for his own private enjoyment will be taken from him. And let it not affect you or make you lazy dispensers of the gifts of faith if the ingratitude of men does not requite your zeal. Your reward will be safe with God, who in a future age will reward each man the more generously the more he has laboured in propagating the gospel. Nor will you in the mean time be cheated of your reward, for you become richer every day in the wealth of the gospel.'

The Lord added another parable as well to teach his disciples that they must care for nothing but the dissemination of the gospel throughout the whole world, striving with all their might to do so; and the time of harvest would come when it pleased the Lord himself. 'The kingdom of the gospel,' he said, 'is like a man casting seed into the earth by day. As soon as the seed is entrusted to the field the sower, feeling safe, falls asleep,[11] and although he sleeps the seed grows quietly without anyone's labour,[12] progressing day and night alike. Finally the seed is born and rises, hastening to fruition of its own accord, driven by the hidden force of nature.[13] Nature has its own steps and maintains them without the sower's effort after the seed has been sown. For as soon as the seed has rotted in the earth it grows into a blade. That is the first hopeful sign of a harvest. Then, when the blade shoots up, an ear grows, but as yet empty. Finally the husks of the ear are filled with full grains of corn. And by these hidden advances nature takes care that no one notices the progress, though he notices that progress has been made. Thus when the seed has ripened, the sower immediately puts in the sickle to cut down what has grown, for he realizes that the time of harvest has come.'

Under the cover of this allegory the Lord covertly taught his apostles the beginning, progress, and perfection of the gospel, the beginning and end of which he himself would act out publicly in his visible body; the intermediate stage, that is, progress, is supplied by the invisible grace of the Holy Spirit. Being the beginning himself, Christ spread the seed of the gospel through all of Judaea. When that had been done he slept, first in death,[14] then rising to eternal rest. And to this day the evangelical seed is sprouting forth while he who first sowed it is asleep, as it were, and it grows in secret increments day and night alike, that is, in fortune and misfortune,[15] and at every opportunity provided by those who support it or fight against it. For what has been sown by him whose will no one can resist cannot fail to sprout.

Although nothing is hidden from God, nevertheless he permits the world to rebel against the gospel, and permits his apostles to be persecuted and slain – thus it appears to non-believers that he is ignorant of what is going on and that he is somehow sleeping, whereas 'he works all in all' [1 Cor 12:6], and more so in our time, through the invisible power of his Spirit. And he will not return to be seen by the world until the business of the gospel has progressed to the point that he himself has predetermined and alone knows – then he will come a second time, visible to all, in the same form in which he ascended to heaven.[16] He will divide the pious from the impious and the pious, like good corn, he will shelter in the granary of eternal peace. We see the small beginnings from which the kingdom of the gospel has sprung, if we measure things according to worldly appearances. It was like a shoot from the sprouting gospel seed which the Pharisees, scribes, priests, elders, prefects, princes, kings, and philosophers strove to overcome and keep from coming forth. They resisted in vain: the gospel seed has begun to take possession of the whole world and will not cease to grow until the world has reached its final stage, until the universal harvest has ripened. Then that inevitable sickle of judgment[17] will be sent and will cut down everyone: the tares will be cast into the fire,[18] and the purest of the pure corn will be safely stored. Although this parable pertains specifically to Jesus, who leads, advances, and perfects the evangelical kingdom, it nevertheless also touches on the apostles and the successors of the apostles, whom God wishes to have but one concern: that the word of the gospel be disseminated as widely as possible. For the time of sowing lasts until the end of the world. And as helpers of Jesus Christ they, too, are sowers, although they do not sow their own seed but the seed that has been handed down to them by Christ. Because it is from heaven, it cannot be suppressed.

The Pharisees, too, had their seeds and the philosophers had their seeds as well,[19] but they could not grow even when the world favoured

them, whereas the seed of the heavenly doctrine grows stronger every day even if the world assails it with all its resources. Thus the apostles, too, having been sent out for this very purpose somehow cast their seed; they frequently changed their abode with one task in mind: that of dispersing the gospel as widely as possible. God gives a crop even to sleepers. His seed has its own sprout, its own ear, its own harvest in each single Christian. The unformed catechumen is the seed; those who have just been reborn in Christ through baptism are the sprout evincing happy hopes in their verdant innocence. When they are made better men and have grown up, making progress in evangelical piety, they bear ears of corn;[20] and when each has ripened in its own measure, they are cut down with the sickle. The sickle is death: thereafter the corn grows neither bigger nor smaller, becomes neither better nor worse. The granary is eternal life.

Indeed, the Lord Jesus expressed the simile of the gospel's progress in another parable also, so that those who did not understand his words then would realize later from the outcome of things that these events were happening not by chance or human counsel but by the providence of divine counsel. And to render the listeners more attentive he said, as if in doubt[21] with what best to compare the kingdom of heaven: 'To what shall we liken the kingdom of heaven? What comparison shall we use to explain its nature and force to men who understand nothing except what they see with their eyes? It is similar,' he said, 'to a mustard seed, which, when sown, is smaller than the seed of any herb planted in the soil, so that if you look at its size or appearance you would not expect anything great to come from it. But once it has sprouted and unfolds from the earth, it prepares to become a tree, hardening from the root up and spreading its branches wide beyond the measure of all herbs so that it even provides birds with shade and a place to nest.' With these and many other parables of this kind the Lord Jesus put before the uneducated and unformed people the image of the gospel's future success, adapting his speech to their limited understanding.

At that time he did not address them in any other form but under the cover of parables, for they were not as yet capable of understanding the bare word. For if he had told them that in a little while he would be slain by the Jews but soon afterwards he would come to life again and spread his glory throughout the whole world, so that he who then seemed the lowest of all would be recognized as the prince of the whole world; that no mortal, however exalted, would find rest or a safe place unless he took refuge under his branches – if he told them that, no one would have either tolerated or believed his words. And yet it was useful that they should remember them as in a dream-vision, so that later on they might recognize the meaning of the parables from the event. To the apostles, however, he explained in private

conversation the hidden meaning of all the parables he had told. And so that day was spent.

But when night drew near, he told his disciples to cross over to the other shore. Because the first step in the gospel's progress is faith in Christ and through Christ in God, the Lord, realizing that his disciples were as yet weak and unformed and had no faith in his teaching, strove in many ways to bring forth and strengthen that faith in them. A strong and immovable faith in Christ is especially necessary at nightfall, that is, when a storm of adverse fortune breaks upon us. Thus the disciples obeyed, dismissed the crowd which could not follow along, and began to convey Jesus to the far shore in the same boat from which he was then teaching. Other small boats accompanied him. The apostles convey Jesus across whenever they bring the gospel message from one place to another. He knew that in the course of doing so, many and serious troubles would be stirred up against them by men who have more love for the things of this world than the things that lead to eternal salvation. To strengthen his disciples against such men and to teach them that no storm, however fierce, ought to terrify them who wholeheartedly believe in the Lord Jesus, he allowed his disciples to incur danger to the point of despair.[22] For when they had already sailed far from the shore there suddenly arose a turbulent storm, so violent that the waves were raised up and the force of the wind broke the waves over the ship and there was imminent danger that it would be filled with the rush of water and sink. In the mean time Jesus was sleeping in the boat, resting his head on a cushion.[23] His sleep was not feigned. He was truly asleep, tired out by labour and vigils, for indeed he bore a human body[24] subject to all the feelings to which we, too, are subject. Of course he was not ignorant of what was going to happen. He knew that a storm would arise. He knew that the apostles would be frightened by the heaving motion[25] and wake him up. He could not have taught them in a more effective manner that those who have faith in Jesus need not fear. They prodded the sleeper, and when he awoke they said: 'Master, are you sleeping soundly while we are perishing? Do you think it does not concern you if we sink?' It was a sign of their faith that they turned to Jesus in the rising danger, but it was an imperfect form of faith,[26] for they thought they were not completely safe while the Lord was sleeping.

When Jesus had been awakened, he rebuked the wind and ordered it to calm down, to show by the facts themselves that he was the Lord of all elements. Then he said to the sea: 'Be silent. Quiet down.' The two elements which obey no man recognized the voice of their maker.[27] Soon the wind calmed down, the waves subsided, and a great calm ensued. Then the Lord turned to his men and reproached their unbelief. 'Why are you so afraid?' he said. 'Do you still lack faith in me, when you have seen so many miracles?'

When the disciples and the others who were in the boat observed this strange sign – the sea, a dumb and unruly element, and the wind, likewise a violent element, suddenly falling silent at the voice reproaching them – they realized that it exceeded human nature and said to each other: 'Who is this man? Not only do diseases and demons obey him, even the dumb elements follow his command.'

The Son of man has no place in this world to lay his head[28] – according to the desires of men; for when he died on the cross and had nowhere to rest his head, he expired with his head bowed. Yet in this case he did not only rest, he rested on a cushion, but suddenly arose – thus we may know what great danger threatens the church whenever Jesus sleeps in us.[29] He sleeps when the shepherds, lured by the comforts of this world, sleep a sleep so profound that however much they are poked, however much shouted at, they cannot be roused; when the bishops sleep deeply,[30] devoted to their desires, drunk with the love of power, intent on the accumulation of money, careless about the flock that has been entrusted to them, forgetful of their own salvation and quite unconcerned about the common danger, so that, once roused, they would think in their heart: 'What am I doing in my madness? The flock of the Lord has been entrusted to me that I may lead them to pasture. Very soon I must come before the tribunal of the eternal judge, who has shed his precious blood for the sheep that he entrusted to my loyal care. What answer shall I give him? I should have carried a light before them, leading them to eternal salvation by the example of a blameless life, but by the example of my corrupt life I have led them to hell. I should have fed them on gospel teaching, but instead of feeding them, I have fleeced them, despoiled them, and slain them. Instead of being their father I have been a tyrant, instead of being a bishop I have been a wolf and a robber.'

In the mean time the storm turns everything upside down, and Jesus, the true shepherd of the churches, is sleeping, ignoring the storm and allowing it to rise; but he sleeps in such a manner that he will immediately awaken at the cries of his people. There is one ship in which Jesus, according to the carnal sense, is carried, but there are many ships accompanying it. There is one universal church, but there are many church communities. Christ is equally in all of them, and since all adhere to the same head, the church is one. No ship following Christ sinks, however much it is tossed on the waves and however much it is endangered; they all reach the harbour safely. This is what the storm and the night teach us: there is no safety in our own strength, all hope of salvation is vested in Christ alone, if a man believes in him wholeheartedly. Satan also arouses storms of this kind in each man's heart frequently and secretly. But after night has seized our heart with errors, after the light of faith has gone out, after the vigour of the gospel spirit sleeps as if

in a stupor, the winds of vicious desires arise and disturb the tranquillity of our soul. The soul itself is in danger, and the oar offers no protection, nor do the sails. Certain destruction looms unless Christ is awakened with fervent and pressing prayers. If he does not immediately hear you when he is called, do not desist, poke him, pluck him until he awakens. And tranquillity will return instantly through him.

Chapter 5

Just as this storm contains the lesson that we must, with Christ's help, bravely bear all troubles this world will stir up against the gospel and that, at Christ's command, they must eventually quiet down completely, so the simile that follows indicates that there will be barbarians and savage nations somewhere who, because of their savage character, will at first attack the gospel teaching but thereafter will make progress and grow gentler and accept the light yoke of the Lord after they have come to know it.

When the storm raised by savage rulers against the gospel had been calmed, Jesus and his companions landed on the opposite shore. That region was called the land of the Gerasenes after the famous city Gerasa in Arabia, at the foot of the mountain Galaad in the tribal region of Manasseh, not far from the lake called Tiberias.[1] For already the action of the Lord Jesus pointed to the notorious savagery of certain nations – of whom one might doubt whether they deserve the name 'human.' Yet no savagery is so notorious that one must despair.

When Jesus came to this region and stepped off the boat, there immediately appeared an image that expressed the habits and disposition of the people,[2] for on becoming aware of the Lord's approach, a man possessed by a most unclean and savage demon burst forth. Shunning the company of men, he was living in deserted places, hiding out in the tombs of the dead that stood by the roadside. And no one made any more attempts to put him in fetters because he had often been fettered before and had torn apart his chains and dashed to pieces his shackles. And no force could subdue him and keep him from ranging freely wherever the demon carried him, for he was not in control of himself. Thus he was free and roamed day and night among the tombs of the dead and through pathless mountains, screaming and gashing himself with stones. If this sight seems wretched and horrible, as indeed it is, let us consider how much more wretched is the spectacle before God's eyes of a man who has nothing human about him but the name, who is a dissolute libertine, a raving wanton, a mad gambler, a senseless drunkard, a brawling, marauding ruffian, a violent man who cannot be restrained by the laws of either God or men,[3] who cannot be held in check by

shame, respect, or fear and dares to do whatever pleases him, a man who can be hired for a paltry fee to fight in any war, to assassinate men he does not know and who have done him no harm, to set ablaze villages and towns, rob temples, and turn everything – sacred or profane – upside down.[4] Add to this perjury, blasphemy, incest – crimes familiar to this kind of man. Add treason, poisoning, and the magical arts, and you will see how much less that man raged who was possessed by demons than this lost soul.

What then? Must one despair of such a man? Not at all, if only he has the fortune to see Jesus. Jesus is seen through faith. For when that unfortunate man, roused by the noise of the strangers, broke out from his hiding place and prepared, as he usually did, to attack them, he saw Jesus from far off and was immediately drawn by his divine power; suddenly changed, he ran up to him and worshipped him. Soon the demon began to cry in a loud voice through the mouth of the man: 'What business do I have with you, Jesus, son of the most high God? I adjure you by God not to torment me.' For Jesus' voice was torment to that demon, for he had said: 'Unclean spirit, come out of the man.' So great was the malice of the demon that it was a great torment for him no longer to be allowed to torment the wretched man.[5] For the demon felt the omnipotent and efficacious voice of Jesus, whom he had to obey, whether he wanted to or not. Now draw a comparison: is this not similar to the affections of men who have reached the height of malice and take pleasure in harming others even if they themselves come to harm and who, if they are restrained by force and deprived of their freedom to commit crimes, suffer great mental anguish?

Jesus, however, asked the unclean spirit his name. 'My name is legion,' he answered, 'for we are many.' Note the military term:[6] the filthy scum of a host conspiring to ruin men; but no host can prevail against the power of Jesus. He drives off a legion as easily as a single man.

Then that leader who spoke on behalf of all demons urgently besought Jesus, whom he acknowledged as the victor, not to drive him out of this region. O wrongheaded malice of demons! He did not ask for mercy or seek some other favour that would improve his own lot; he considered it a favour if he was allowed to live where he had most occasion to do harm. As if a wicked band of soldiers who, when the superior power of a prince bears down on them and they are commanded to break garrison, were to say: 'We are not asking for pay, only let us range through the fields and plunder at our own risk.'

Jesus did not reply to his request, but there was in the vicinity near the mountain a large herd of pigs feeding in the fields. Note that this is the animal which is abominable to true Jews while most agreeable to idolatrous gentiles. The demons then asked that they be allowed at least to enter into

the pigs. If we are not allowed to ruin the man, they said – since you seize him from us – let our malice be sated somehow by the ruin of this unclean animal. This Jesus granted readily, for he was not concerned with the salvation of pigs but of men; he showed us that for the sake of one man's salvation we must not heed the loss, however grave, of all other things. But the legion of unclean demons left the man who was to be purified by the Spirit of God and entered into the herd of pigs. Soon they were driven at full speed across the steep mountainside into the water,[7] where they drowned. And they were about two thousand in number. Let men beware lest they be found similar to pigs, for demons are fond of entering such minds.[8]

Moreover, when the swineherds saw the ominous deed, they did not come to the aid of their swine but, terrified by fear, fled into the neighbouring towns and nearby houses; and they told everyone what they had seen. The good shepherd comes to the aid of his flock of sheep when they are in danger,[9] but when flock and shepherd are doomed and lost alike, the flock perishes and is utterly destroyed, while the terrified shepherds do nothing but run away.

On account of this news people came running together from all directions, from city and country, eager to see with their own eyes what they had heard with their ears. For what they had heard from the swineherds seemed incredible. Thus they came to Jesus and saw the man who, as all knew, had formerly been tormented by a most savage demon and on account of his uncontrollable fury habitually broke apart all chains and shackles, tore his clothes, and gashed himself with stones, who had attacked passers-by and filled everyone's ears with mad shrieks, while now he was sitting at Jesus' feet, quiet, clothed, and in his right mind. Immediately those who had been present at the spectacular event told the story all over again to those who had come running: of the legion that had been expelled and of the swine that had been plunged into the lake. When a careful investigation of the matter established that it was no empty tale, fear struck them and they began to ask Jesus to leave their region. They were a wicked and ignorant tribe who did not wholly know Jesus: they saw his power, but they did not notice his kindness in restoring the man to health, and the loss of swine affected them more than the salvation of a man. They feared for their cattle, their donkeys, and their swine, being concerned about their bellies but unconcerned about their spirits.[10] Yet it is somehow a first step towards salvation to fear the power of God.

Teaching us by his action that the roses of the gospel must not be cast before swine,[11] the Lord returned to the shore and boarded the ship. In the mean time, when the man who had been freed from the demon saw the author of his sanity leave, he began to beg him to let him be one of the

company. But the Lord preferred to have him as a herald rather than as a companion, for that was more conducive to the salvation of many. 'Rather go home to your family and friends,' he said, 'and proclaim among them what favour God has conferred on you and how he pitied you when you were pitiful in the eyes of all, but given up by them all.' That region had ten towns, whence it was called Decapolis.

The man obeyed Jesus' command and left, proclaiming in all these communities what kind of man he had been and what kind of man he had now become by the kind deed of Jesus. His tale found credence among all, for he had been known to the majority of people in that region and now clearly demonstrated that he had obtained from Jesus a sound and healthy mind. He was not ashamed of his former calamity, as he was illuminating the glory of God. Hear these words, idolater, fornicator, gambler, glutton, prodigal, rapist, robber, arsonist, hooligan, poisoner, assassin – do not despair. Only hurry to Jesus. Do not count the number and magnitude of your crimes, only consider that Jesus is the one who has come to save men and who can do everything with one nod. When the legion of demons has left you, when you have been made sane, proclaim God's mercy towards you, most of all among your own people. Be not ashamed to confess your former life, for if as many people as possible know how abominable you have been before, it will also contribute to the illumination of Jesus' mercy. Acknowledge and confess what kind of man you were and that you have now suddenly become a new man. Do not ascribe it to your merits but to the gratuitous kindness of God, who has mercy on any man he chooses; for he has no obligation or debt to anyone.[12]

When this seed had been sown, so to speak, among the Gerasenes, the Lord Jesus once again crossed the lake. The frequent change of place denotes the progress of the gospel; the variety of miracles indicates that the evangelical doctor must strive at every opportunity to lead as many men as possible to salvation. When he had been conveyed to the opposite shore, a huge crowd of men once again came together in that place. For just as a magnet attracts iron, so kindness draws all men.[13]

When he was walking along the lake, one of the elders of the synagogue, by the name of Jairus, sought him out. His hopes had been raised by Jesus' fame and he had come to that place with the rest of the crowd. For there was a matter that greatly weighed on his mind and in which he desired the presence of Jesus. When he saw him brought back to the shore, he was overjoyed; and since those who greatly desire something are humble, even if it be the chief of the synagogue, the first, that is, among the proud, he fell down at Jesus' feet and besought him, saying: 'Lord, my daughter, a girl of twelve years, who was to be the foremost comfort of my

old age, is in danger of her life, already breathing her last. Come, lay your hand on her that she be healed by your touch and live.'

From his words Jesus saw very clearly that his faith was not yet solid,[14] for he had mentioned that her life was in danger – as if he could not also raise the girl from the dead[15] – and he even required his presence and the touch of his hand – as if Jesus could not also heal whom he wished by a word and in his absence. Jesus promised that he would come and followed him as he hurried ahead, displaying the type of the pastor, who must be available to all – Greeks and non-Greeks, prominent and obscure, rich and poor, learned and unlearned – to obtain the salvation of their souls. But on the way an occasion arose by which the imperfect faith of the chief stood corrected, and it happened through the example of a weak woman whose lack of faith would have been the more pardonable the less she knew Christ through knowledge of the law. For a tightly packed crowd accompanied Jesus when he went to the house of the chief, partly because they could not be separated from Jesus, partly because they wanted to be spectators of the event; and the prominence of the man who had asked Jesus increased their desire to be spectators.

Thus while everyone wanted to be next to Jesus, he was inconvenienced by the crowd pressing against him. In the crowd was a woman who had been suffering from a vile, shameful, and at the same time incurable disease for twelve years: a flow of blood. She was the more unfortunate in that she had entrusted her hope for a cure to the magnificent promises of her physicians and had run in vain from one to another who made her a more certain promise, and from him to yet another, always deceived by some tempting hope. She had spent all her resources on them, yet the skill of the physicians had benefited her so little that she was now worse than if she had never employed them. There was nothing they had not promised, tormenting the wretched woman with their attendance and adding a new complaint to the old: poverty to the flow of blood, which they had only succeeded in making worse. For such is the general run of men professing the human art of medicine. Yet it often happens that health lies in despairing of health. When she began to distrust physicians and they themselves finally announced that there was no hope, realizing that she had nothing more to give them, she began to come closer to a cure. For God helps no one with greater readiness than the person who has no human protection. The woman had merely heard about Jesus and, having immediately conceived a wonderful faith in him, she mingled with the packed crowd. A woman's bashfulness and the foulness of her disease kept her from doing what the leader of the synagogue had done; instead she approached Jesus from behind and, fighting her way through the knot of men who were pushing at each other, she touched Jesus'

garment. For she had conceived such hope in him that she said to herself: 'If I succeed in touching even the hem of his garment I shall be delivered from my disease.' Deserted by the physicians by whom she had been tormented at great expense, she had found another physician, who confers complete health freely and immediately. And the woman was not deceived in her faith. As soon as she touched the Lord's garment the flow of blood ceased, the liquid that used to flow as from a perennial fountain was suddenly stopped. Indeed, she herself sensed that she had recovered all the bodily strength she had possessed before she began to labour under this disease.

Those who are emasculated by the excesses, desires, and pleasures of this world should flee nowhere else but to Jesus. If they put their trust in philosophers, in legal experts,[16] in magical arts, in Pharisaical ceremonies, if they waste their life and mental powers on them, they would only increase their disease and fall into poverty – unless perhaps poverty and the loss of youth and talent is easy[17] to bear.

The woman was joyful, having, so to speak, stolen[18] this favour from Christ, who, she thought, could be deceived like a human being; or if he was not deceived, she hoped that in his kindness he would bear with the embarrassment of a woman. But the Lord was more concerned with God's glory and the salvation of many[19] than with the embarrassment of one woman. He was not unaware that he had been touched, indeed he felt the favour of health reaching the woman through his touch, and turning to the crowd pressing against him from behind, he said: 'Who touched my garment?' The disciples, who had no notion of what had happened, answered the Lord: 'You see the crowd pressing against you from all sides and you ask who has touched you?' Those who read the gospel, touch Christ; those who consecrate or take his holy body, touch Christ; but not all who touch him are healed.[20] Only the woman who had touched him with great faith was healed. In his kindness Jesus asked no other reward for his favour than a confession of sin and an acknowledgement of divine mercy. Thus when the woman kept silent out of embarrassment, hoping that she could stay hidden, Jesus ran his eyes over the crowd as if he wanted to recognize the woman who had touched him. Looking around he asked in a kindly manner for an acknowledgement of the favour that had been received. He did not wish to betray her lest he appear to make the favour a matter of reproach. The woman kept silent because of a woman's bashfulness, not because of the vice of ingratitude. An incentive was added to drive away the useless embarrassment and elicit the salutary confession. For what is there that a look from Jesus cannot effect? This is how he looked upon Peter,[21] and he came to his senses.

The woman, however, knew in what condition she had approached

Jesus and the favour she had obtained from him and did not dare to conceal it. Shaking off her woman's bashfulness, she came forward into the sight of Jesus, afraid and trembling. For she feared to be rebuked for her importunity. She fell down at his knees and told the matter as it was while all were listening. She kept nothing secret, she did not cover up her long-standing disease, the frustrated skill of the physicians, the furtive touching of Jesus' garment, the faith she had in him. The Lord Jesus loves this kind of confession, which makes the sinner recognize himself and attribute all the glory for his restored health to God. Such a confession awakens in many a similar faith by showing that only from Jesus comes gratuitous salvation and that it does not matter under how many or what kinds of vices you labour, only how much faith you have in God's power or goodness. Even if your spiritual disease is hidden, confess it to Jesus, who does not betray or reproach, but heals. If it is a well-known vice, confess it publicly,[22] so that just as you have enticed many to sin by your example, so in your conversion you call many to mend their ways. The feeling of shame must be shaken off, for it begrudges God his glory and your neighbour his salvation. You will be glad that you have shaken it off, for afterwards you feel more at peace for having unburdened your conscience, just as if you were told by the Lord Jesus what the woman was told. And what was she told?

'Daughter, your faith in me has restored your health, which the art of the physicians could not have given you. Go with a glad and tranquil heart, I want you to have lasting enjoyment of this favour.' Can you see this, can you hear this, chief of the synagogue? For this scene is played for you and those similar to you. The woman laboured under an incurable disease; she had progressed from bad to worse; on account of her notable faith in Jesus she was cured by simply touching his garment, and you fetch him to your house like a physician, ask him to lay on his hand, and tell him to hurry.

While Jesus was answering the woman, messengers came from the house of the chief saying: 'Your daughter has died. Why do you go on troubling the master in vain?' When they had said this, the chief, who before had an uncertain hope mixed with great fear, did not dare to make any further demands on the Lord, as one who despaired. The messengers tell him to despair: 'She is dead.' This is what the majority of people habitually do with regard to men who have fallen into some great vice such as adultery, incest, theft, or murder. There is an outcry: 'He is past all hope of salvation.'[23] Jesus, however, does not allow anyone to despair except the man who refuses to have faith. Jews may despair; but the Christian who knows God's goodness to equal his power never despairs. He therefore came to the aid of the sinking hopes of the chief, addressing him with gentle words: 'Do not fear even if she is dead. Only have faith. It does not matter

how great is the evil besetting your daughter but rather how firm is your faith.' Having spoken thus, he came to the house of the chief and entered. The motley crowd, however, was left behind outside; not even the disciples were admitted, except Simon Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. In their company Jesus entered the house of the chief. There he encountered ostentatious funeral cries, a multitude of relatives, male and female, bewailing with pitiful lament the untimely death of the girl. For the common run of men generally finds the death of young people more painful to bear than that of old people, although nothing is more desirable than to die when life is sweetest, before the spirit is polluted with the many vices of this life. For it does not matter how long you have lived, but rather how well you have lived. Teaching us that deaths must not be lamented with vain dirges, Jesus restrained the commotion of the mourners.

'Why,' he said, 'do you fill the house with commotion and cries? The girl is not dead, she is sleeping.' Indeed, as far as the Lord was concerned, she was sleeping,[24] for he could raise her with a word more easily than a man can awaken another from sleep.[25] And sleep is very much an image and a meditation upon death.[26] For sleep saps the strength of the mind and takes away the senses; if it were perpetual it would be true death. But those who were at the dead girl's side did not understand the meaning of Jesus' words and laughed at him for believing that she was still alive when it was obvious that she had died.

Jesus drove away all who with their tumultuous but vain cries filled the house; for not only did they not contribute anything to the salvation of the dead girl, but they even intensified the parents' grief and laughed at Jesus, the source of her salvation. There is no need for this crowd when a spirit deadened by sin must be recalled to a life of innocence. Jesus did this in the private house of a stranger. What would he do if he saw some people's pompous funerals, which border on insanity? People are hired to put on a show of tears, utter wails, tear out their hair (which is sometimes false), beat their breasts, scratch their cheeks, scream words more than insane and totally lacking in faith. They put milk beside the corpse to attract the wandering soul.[27] They call him by name again and again: 'Return, Philip, come back, Philip, give yourself back to us, Philip.' They reproach the inanimate corpse: 'Why have you forsaken your family? Why do you want to kill us with grief? You lacked nothing to live a sweet life: neither wealth, nor famous lineage, nor office, nor beauty, nor youth. O cruel man! O wretched us!' Now add trumpets playing to the deaf man, add singers singing their lugubrious dirges in vain for a dead man who senses nothing – dirges that do not take away the grief of the living but only increase it. Add the long procession of torch bearers, the rows of black-clad mourners. Some even

include black horses in the procession, which carry the dead man's coat of arms and have their necks tied to their legs to keep their heads bowed,[28] so that they seem to seek their master who has descended to the nether region. I shall not mention the banquets, the solemn *parentalia*,[29] the magnificent and costly tombs, as if there had not been enough luxury and ambition in life unless they proclaimed it in death also. Such things seem insane even to the more prudent among the pagans;[30] how much more ought they to be removed from the custom of Christians, when they are all asleep rather than dead,[31] to be awakened by the trumpet of the angel on the last day.

But to return to the sequence of the narrative, Jesus drove them all out, and having summoned both parents of the girl, he entered the bedroom where the lifeless corpse was laid out. For he wished them to be witnesses of the miracle. Here the Lord took the girl's hand and said to her, as if he was to awake her from sleep: '*Thalita*[32] *cumi*,' which in Syriac means: 'Lo, girl, arise.' Men who are overcome by profound sleep can sometimes not be awakened even if you call them repeatedly and prod them; nor are people who have been awakened immediately alert, but for a while they are half-asleep, yawning and stretching out their arms, letting their heads droop, sometimes even with their chins touching their breasts, and if you are not persistent, they will go back to sleep. But the girl who was dead rose immediately at the voice of Jesus calling her and walked around. Not only had she come back to life, she was alert and lively. For the little soul which had been driven out by the illness and had left the body recognized the voice of its maker and without hesitation returned to the abode it had left. The joy over the resurrection of the girl was the fuller the more lamentable her death had been on account of her tender age, for she was no more than twelve years old. This sight – never seen before – greatly astonished the mother and father of the girl. Jesus, however, demanded from them neither a reward nor a vote of thanks, but merely told them to give her food to make it more certain that life had been restored to the dead girl.[33] For eating is not only a sign of life, but also of good health.

He also told them not to divulge what had been done before a few witnesses and in private, either because he preferred that what had come to pass should be disclosed by others whom he had driven from the room rather than by the chief, who would herald the Lord's goodness more grudgingly and with less credibility, or else because by telling them to keep quiet what he knew they would not keep quiet he wanted to teach us that we must shun human glory in rendering any favours.

If one considers more deeply the arcane moral hidden in this miracle (for Jesus' deeds, too, are parables), one discovers this: the girl of twelve years who died when she had barely entered adolescence represents the

man who has secretly lapsed into sin for the first time on account of his weakness but who can easily be healed because he has not yet lost his feeling of shame and has not yet made a habit of his sin by long custom. Faced with such a man the priests ought to imitate Jesus' kindness, for he raised up the girl without great ado, in her house, and summoning only a few witnesses. For men who have lapsed in this manner need only a private reproof, lest when their sin is brought out into the open they cast off all shame or are consumed by excessive grief. The first lapse, if it happens through weakness, is very easily corrected. It is more difficult to heal him whose vice has already become public, and most difficult of all to heal the man who has become callous by long custom of sin. And so he raised up the girl with a word, in a private house, with only a few people present. But the young man who was carried out by bearers was restored to life with greater effort.[34] The mother is crying together with the crowd of companions. The young man is carried out. First the mother is told: 'Do not cry.' Then the bier is touched and the bearers stop; soon the young man is called: 'Lo, I tell you, rise.' First he raises himself and sits up on the bier, then he begins to speak. Finally he leaps up and is restored to his mother. Another time, Jesus asks to be shown the grave of Lazarus, as if he did not know it; time and again he breaks out in tears, and in his grief 'he groans in the spirit' [John 11:33]. Orders are given to lift the stone. Lazarus is called in a loud voice. The dead man comes forth, but wrapped in bandages. The bandages are unwrapped and he takes food. But it was no more difficult for Christ to resuscitate a corpse that had been dead four days than one that had just expired, for on the final day he will recall to life through the angel's voice the bodies of all mortals who have been in their graves so many thousand years; but by this simile he wished to teach us that they who have over a long period of time grown used to vices come to their senses with difficulty. Not that we should despair, but that we should seek to come to our senses earlier and try more zealously to make even such men return to spiritual goodness.

And I think this, too, is worth noting: that Jesus wanted to be proclaimed by the possessed of Gerasa, but told the chief of the synagogue to keep silent. Indeed, the envious synagogue tried to obscure the glory of the Lord Jesus, for even after the apostles had been punished she decreed that they could not speak the name of Jesus.[35] But their envy came to naught. The more they tried to suppress the salutary name of Jesus, the more widely was it proclaimed among the gentiles. The priests keep silent, the Pharisees protest, the scribes utter abuse, Herod is derisive, but idolaters, robbers, incestuous men, and adulterers praise God, having suddenly been freed through evangelical grace from their former vices as from most cruel demons.

Chapter 6

Wherever and on whatever occasion the Lord Jesus comes and goes, he is always true to himself, bringing salvation, so as to admonish the disciples who accompany him that the business of the gospel must never be left unattended, but must be carried on at every opportunity, to render bad men good or good men better, whether living at home or abroad, in public or private life, even when travelling by ship or cart, in conversation with friends, at banquets, in short, even in jest and play: the man who is truly imbued with evangelical kindness always leaves behind someone changed for the better.

After Jesus had ventured to go into the region of the Gerasenes, he left the vicinity of the lake and withdrew to his native region, lest he seem to be readier to do good to strangers than to his own people. For the name of Nazareth has won fame because the Lord was brought up in Nazareth and lived there for a long time. His disciples accompanied him, being now his constant companions.

When the Sabbath day had come on which the Jews used to meet according to a most praiseworthy custom – not to beguile, that is, to waste, the holy day with inept shows, inane tales, profane games, or empty little songs, but in pious conversation to learn or teach the law of the Lord – Jesus, too, entered the assembly to commend this practice by his example, so that all might understand how shameful it would be for us not to strive to know the philosophy of the gospel, which was given us by the Son of God himself, with equal care or even greater attention than the Jews, who were so zealous to learn the carnal law given them by Moses, which was neither perfect nor everlasting. When Jesus taught in the synagogue, his authority was weakened in the eyes of many to whom he was known in the flesh.[1] They knew his lowly parents, the humble home from which he came. They never even dreamt of his heavenly Father, and the eternal home whence he had descended for our sake. They knew the craft by which his father Joseph supported his family and which Jesus himself had practised[2] in his early years. He was a carpenter, a craft appropriate to him through whom the heavenly Father had once fashioned this world.[3] Mankind was shaped by an artisan – it is appropriate that it should be redeemed by an artisan. When those who knew Jesus – he had lived among his people until he was almost thirty and had never displayed any Pharisaical learning – when they heard him teach with great authority things they had never heard from the most learnt Pharisees, they were greatly surprised and said among themselves: 'What has suddenly changed this man? From where does he get all this knowledge? And what new kind of wisdom is this that has been given to

him? And where did he get that efficacious power to work miracles, a power so great that we have never heard the like of it in any of the prophets? He has only been away for a few months, how is it that he has changed so suddenly on his return to us? Is this not Jesus, the carpenter, the son of the carpenter Joseph and of Mary, that lowly and humble little woman? Do we not know him as well as all his family? Do not his closest relatives, his brothers and sisters, live among us?'

Thus they secretly envied Jesus whom they had until recently known as a humble man and who was now suddenly exalted. Indeed, they were offended, for they knew only too well the infirmity of his flesh. Since the Lord Jesus realized this, he said: 'Nowhere is a prophet more despised than in his own country, among his own kin and members of his household.' The work of the Spirit does not accord well with carnal affections. It does not at all suit the true prophet of the gospel to acknowledge a fatherland here, a home, acquaintances, relatives, or friends, when he teaches contempt of this world, promises the joys of a heavenly fatherland, teaches that we must be reborn through baptism in Christ, teaches that we must mortify the members we have on earth, that we may live by the Spirit of heaven. No wonder that the denizens of this earth do not recognize the man who has already been made a citizen of another country.

Thus Jesus could not work many miracles there among his people, although he was omnipotent and wished to save as many as possible: indeed the unbelief of his acquaintances and relatives stood in the way.[4] For while among other tribes he had easily driven out all kinds of disease from many people, had cast out demons and healed lepers, in Nazareth he restored only a few sick men to health, and that by a laying on of hands. Thus Jesus left, as one astonished at the great unbelief of his people, and travelled throughout the neighbouring villages on all sides, everywhere sowing the seed of the gospel. In doing so he admonished his disciples not to rely on human feelings in matters of the gospel, for what happened to Jesus in his own country would happen to them in Judaea; rather they should go wherever they saw hope for a plentiful harvest. For the fruit of evangelical teaching is most plentiful where people are inclined to believe. This condition is not found among relatives or among Pharisees or among kings. The relatives look down on Jesus, the Pharisees envy him, and the kings deride the foolishness of the cross.

Now the time had come for the apostles whom he had destined for the evangelical task and who had now been for some time the constant companions of Jesus to rehearse their future task, and to give the leader a sample of their diligence and loyalty. He therefore assembled the twelve whom he had selected for this task as the most outstanding men, and when

they had all gathered together in one body he addressed them with one speech, lest there be any disagreement among them when they had been sent by the same teacher and were bound by the same commandments. To make their enterprise more fruitful, he sent them out in pairs. This pairing commends to us brotherly love, without which the gospel does not bear fruit; and he designated a province to each pair jointly as though to prefects. For this was in the interest of propagating the kingdom of the gospel. And he dispatched them naked and unarmed, lest human resources claim any stake in this heavenly business. Moreover, lest the authority of fishermen and private individuals be too light, he added a gift which the monarchs of this world cannot give to their envoys and prefects.[5] For he gave them the power of taking away diseases and casting out demons. Can an emperor do the like? He can give them the power of gold, troops, battleaxes, and war engines – the means which he himself has in abundance; but no imperial prefect has enough power to cure even blear eyes by invoking the name of the emperor. And this power Jesus gave to them with the understanding that with it they should freely aid all men in need.

And that they should be better equipped for the task, which requires an energetic and tireless administrator, he instructed them to bring only a staff on this journey and to carry no baggage, provisions, or arms: no bag in which to keep provisions, not so much as a piece of bread that might be carried without a bag, no belts laden with money. He instructed them not to guard their shins with pads, but to wear only sandals to protect the soles of their feet against injury from stones and thorns. They were to content themselves with simple clothing. Jesus' purpose in giving these instructions was to teach his disciples, who were as yet raw and unformed, by a simple rule[6] that the man who has taken on the evangelical office must be free and unencumbered by any care for corporeal things, lest there be an obstacle slowing down the progress of the heavenly doctrine. Just as their business was very different from the business of this world, so their kind of mission is a new one. They receive the pattern of the doctrine lest they presume to teach something other than what has been handed down to them by their teacher. And this they had in common with human missions in which it is also a capital offence to go beyond the prescribed mandate. They are all sent out by one and the same master and invested with equal power lest competition arise among them. They are sent in pairs to remind them of brotherly concord and so that brother may aid brother. They are sent to diverse places that the fruit of the gospel may be spread more widely. In addition they are given the power to heal diseases, but in the name of Jesus, so that, just as they had undertaken to disseminate another's doctrine in good faith, they would also know that it was the Lord's power, not their

own, that drove out diseases. He forbade them to carry a satchel, bread, money, or two cloaks, so that they should rely on the promise of their teacher in complete faith, should trust in his protection to keep them safe from all violence of their enemies, and should realize that through his providence they would lack nothing as far as their daily physical needs were concerned. For while nothing can satisfy desire, nature's needs are satisfied with very little.[7]

Nor did the Lord utter these words in the sense that it would never be right for those who carried on the business of the gospel to bring along the essentials, a small satchel or some money, which the apostles would not hesitate to do even today. Indeed, perhaps the man who teaches the gospel at his own expense merits greater praise. But with this kind of hyperbole Jesus wished to free his disciples, who were as yet simple and inexperienced, completely from all care of those things that often hold the mind back when it goes about some heavenly business. Otherwise he knew that it would occur to them to say: 'You are sending us to strange countries; you expose us to manifold dangers naked and unarmed. Who will feed us when we are hungry? Who will defend us when we meet with violence? Who will clothe us when there is a cold spell? You want us to teach freely and you want us to heal men freely. But he who lives in a strange country stands in need of many things.' Jesus strove to pluck from the hearts of his apostles such anxious and lowly concerns, which often arise from lack of faith, for they were unworthy of so great a task. Moreover, his figurative manner of speech has the effect of implanting what is taught more deeply in simple minds. For the evangelical teacher would not commit a sin if he used boots or two cloaks among the Getes[8] or if he set out for the Libyan desert[9] or some inhospitable tribe and brought along some provisions and money. But whatever delays the progress of the gospel must be rejected. Now think how great a burden weighs those down who set out on behalf of the gospel, carrying around royal wealth and bringing with them the titles and desires of this world and a thirst for revenge if anything grievous should happen to them. We are burdened more by our thoughts than by satchels or garments. Unless a man discards all these burdens he is not a suitable envoy of Jesus Christ. There is also a figurative meaning in those things that Jesus allows them to use, for he admits staff and sandals. Sandals are the lightest kind of shoe and protect the feet from injury without impeding speed. In allowing sandals but forbidding boots, he teaches us the same thing: he forbids delay and encourages speed.[10] In allowing a staff but forbidding a stick, he also teaches the same thing. For a staff is an aid to the traveller. It does not delay his journey but hastens it. A stick, on the other hand, is a burden and is usually carried against attack. Thus he who allows a staff and nothing further and

who forbids carrying a stick wants the herald of the gospel to rely on none but Christ's help against the assault of evil men. The staff suits a traveller; the stick a fighter.[11] Hence the man who carries on the business of the gospel must always progress to a more perfect stage and must be very far removed from any desire for revenge.

When this concern had been plucked from the hearts of the apostles, Jesus proceeded to show them the reason why there was no need whatsoever to be plagued by concern for such things. 'Do not worry about food or lodging,' he said. 'When you come to a village or town, stay in whatever house will receive you, even if it is lowly and humble, and stay there until the progress of the gospel calls you elsewhere and you have decided to depart. Being but few and content with little, you will not be burdensome guests for anyone. There can hardly be a community so hopeless and incurable that no one can be found in it gladly to receive such guests, when there are people who hire a physician at a large fee and fetch him from afar.

'But if there happens to be a house or community so ungrateful that they do not receive you who freely bear the gift of heaven by which they are healed in body and soul, do not desist from your undertaking on account of a few hard-hearted men, but leave the town for the time being and go on to other towns; first, however, make the folly of those who were unwilling to receive you a matter of reproach. For when you leave and go out into the street, shake the dust from your feet to remind them and make them understand that he who had come was bringing by far the gladdest tidings and salvation gratuitously. Such a great good cannot be bought at any price, such precious merchandise must not be thrust on unwilling and disdainful men. Let them take the blame for their own downfall, for they preferred to perish when they could have been saved. Let them understand that you sought nothing from them but the salvation of your neighbours, so that you do not want to cause them any loss, not even of dust. Such pride becomes my envoys when dealing with stubborn and disdainful men. But when you leave, impress on them one thing, even if they are unwilling to listen. Tell them: "Know that the kingdom of God is at hand, whether you receive it or not. If you receive it, its coming is to your advantage; if you reject it, it will come nevertheless, and to your great detriment."'

Furnished with such provisions, the envoys of Jesus left their Lord and, as they had been commanded, called all to repentance of their former lives: the kingdom of God was at hand; it would bring perfect justice to all through faith in the gospel. For this is the first principle of the evangelical doctrine: to believe what you hear and to have faith in what is promised.

When the Lord Jesus had carefully instructed his apostles with these

and many other words of this kind, the twelve captains of the heavenly kingdom set out, and matters proceeded in order: they proclaimed to all that they must repent of their former evil deeds, that they must not trust in their own deeds but only in the promise of the gospel.[12] And they found men who received their teaching with willing ears. Nor was a large number of miracles lacking to lend credibility to the words of men, however humble and unknown. They anointed the sick, and they were healed. They commanded evil spirits to leave in the name of Jesus, and they left. That was no medicinal oil – for who can cure all diseases with one medicine? – but a sacrament. Visible oil was put on the skin, and the body was healed; but the oil of evangelical grace must be put on our spirits by our anointed Jesus if we are soon to be delivered of the disease of vices. The words by which they drove out demons were not the imprecations of magicians but the words of the gospel, efficacious through faith. Indeed, this was the power of the heavenly kingdom. What could be more humble or despised than the apostles? But the less power they had, the more readily their actions could be ascribed to divine power. They had no wealth, no learning, no office, no entourage, no famous lineage, no renown, no authority. They had nothing but simple faith in Jesus, whom they did not as yet know perfectly.[13]

Through these deeds Jesus' fame grew day by day so that his name became known even to King Herod. For Jesus becomes known to kings too late, though acquaintance with him would be most fitting for them and lack of it for none more unfortunate. Since Jesus' miracles were too frequent and manifest for anyone to argue that they were a fraud, too salutary for anyone to allege that they were done through evil demons, when many uttered diverse opinions about the Lord, Herod finally pronounced his own verdict: 'John,' he said, 'has risen from the dead, and for this reason he now has the power of working miracles.'

Others again, basing their conjecture on the prophecy of Malachi,[14] said that Jesus was Elijah, whose return is promised before the great and fearful day of the Lord. There were men who denied that he was Elijah, who had the greatest authority among the Jews, and said that he was one of the lesser prophets come back to life.

When he had listened to their opinions, Herod insisted on his own, saying: 'No, he is John himself, whom I have beheaded. He has come to life and, having been made a saint, now effects deeds exceeding human strength.' There was no one among them who did not believe in the resurrection of bodies. Yet today[15] there are many who deny that Christ came back to life. In this case you may see how wrong are the judgments of impious men: they believed that John had come back to life although he had won no fame with miracles,[16] while they stubbornly deny that Jesus has come

to life when his divine power was revealed in so many ways. Ponder also the folly of impious kings. Herod declared that John had come to life, he declared that he now had greater power than when he was alive, and yet he almost bragged about having put him to death and was prepared to slay him again if he could. It is worth while to hear what occasioned so infamous a deed.

Herod, on the instigation of an incestuous woman, had John arrested and thrown in bonds, not because of any crime, but because a conflict had arisen about Herodias, the daughter of King Aretas, who had first been promised to Philip, the tetrarch of Ituraea and Trachonitis.[17] When a quarrel arose, Aretas took her away from his son-in-law, to whom she had already born a daughter, and gave her in marriage to Herod, Philip's brother and his enemy. But John did not tolerate the incestuous marriage, and the more to resemble Elijah,[18] who with great candour had reprehended Ahab and Jezebel,[19] said to the king: 'It is not lawful that you should have in your house the wife of your brother when he is still among the living and not sterile.' Herodias, however, who had already forfeited her earlier marriage and feared that by John's effort she would be excluded from this one as well,[20] plotted against him and sought an occasion to kill him, but was unsuccessful. Herod did not love John from his heart, but he respected and feared him. This is the power of true virtue, which can be formidable even to kings. For he knew that the man was just and holy, and he respected him and in many things he obeyed his counsel and listened to him gladly. This was the obstacle that prevented the godless woman from killing him. She had the evil intention but lacked the opportunity,[21] the only thing that keeps evil people from doing harm.

The advent of Herod's birthday offered a suitable opportunity for this wicked deed. For it was appropriate that the birthday of the wicked king should be made funereal by the death of a most holy man, that the center of luxury and courtly pleasure should bear the stain of the cruel death of an innocent man.[22] For when a birthday supper, furnished with great luxury and at great expense, was provided for the princes, tribunes, and primates of Galilee, that Herod might have more witnesses for his cruelty, the young daughter of Herodias and Philip entered into the banquet hall to delight the participants with an unseemly and lascivious dance. The more shameless her dance, the more pleased the guests and the king, who was doubly bereft of his senses, heated as he was by passion for his incestuous wife and by the wine. Thus with royal munificence he said to the girl: 'Ask of me whatever you want, for you will demand nothing in vain.' To give the girl more confidence to ask whatever she wanted, he bound his drunken promise with an oath: 'Whatever you ask – and be it half of my kingdom – I shall give it to you.' O speech worthy of a most foolish and drunken king!

The girl, however, who had begun to act out this scene on the instigation of her mother – for it was she who had taken notice of the day, place, and hour, and who had instructed the dancer – did not dare immediately to utter her wish, but left the banquet and consulted with her mother, saying: 'The king confirmed by an oath that he would give me whatever I ask for. What then shall I demand?' Here was certainly a question to give one pause so as not to lose a great opportunity. But the incestuous woman did not hesitate: nothing was dearer to her than the death of the most holy man. And she answered: 'Ask for the head of John the Baptist.'

O daughter, docile and obedient in crime! Immediately she returned to the company. It was again the mother who had counselled her to hurry before the king's fervent heart had cooled down. Therefore she went to the king and asked the reward for her sinful dance, saying: 'I ask for only one thing to be granted – I want you to give me without delay the head of John the Baptist, served on a platter.' Observe here the preposterous piety of an impious king.[23] Although no practice was more familiar to him than breaking the bonds of all treaties and solemn vows, in this case he felt in conscience bound by his most foolish oath, especially since he had given it before so many witnesses. Therefore lest he should seem to break faith and fail to fulfil what he had sworn perhaps by his royal crown or his guardian spirit or the head of the little dancer, or lest it seemed inhumane if the girl were seen to be sent away sad, or lest the good spirits of the guests, whom the girl had pleased, be darkened by a little cloud of displeasure, he granted the wish – O faith and religious observance, O civility and humanity worthy to be recorded in chronicles!

Without delay the executioner is dispatched and the sacred head of the most innocent man is brought in, like a course on a platter. It is handed to the girl, the girl hands it to her mother, a gift more precious to her than half a kingdom. With this funereal sight the foolish and insane king celebrated his birthday and gratified the incestuous woman.

The king has him slain, the executioner brings his head, the girl gets her wish, the funereal reward is turned over to the mother, the source and instigator of these evils. O guests worthy of such a host! None was friend enough to the king to intercede and prevent this nefarious deed. Are we surprised, then, to see kings daring sometimes to commit outrageous crimes when they have a mind like Herod's, given to incestuous love and drinking, and companions who are either timid or inclined to cruelty?

When news of this event reached the disciples of John, they carried away the corpse and gave it an honourable burial. But there is some hidden underlying meaning in these things. Although John was a type of the law, he was also a precursor of the gospel and as such was given the reward of the

gospel, namely a glorious death, yet a different death from that of the Lord. In John's case, his head was cut off secretly after he had already spent some time imprisoned and in bonds. Christ was publicly raised on the cross.[24] The darkness of prison corresponds to the shadows and figures of the law; they had to yield to the dawning light of the gospel. And the carnal ceremonies deserved to be weakened that spiritual freedom might increase; what belonged to an atmosphere of fear deserved to be fettered so that faith and gospel love might spread. Finally, it was fitting that the human head be cut off so that the church should henceforth acknowledge no other head but the one Jesus. In this manner the law, put to death and buried with honour, gave way to the Lord Jesus, who was to preach the philosophy of the Spirit. For we owe our faith in the gospel in large part to the Old Testament, which outlined Jesus Christ to us so many centuries ago in shadows and figures, and promised and depicted him in the oracles of the prophets.

While these things were happening, the apostles returned, their mission completed, and at once congregated around Jesus, the head of the whole enterprise. From him all things take their beginning, to him all things must return.[25] From him the apostles had departed in harmony after receiving their orders, that together they might execute their task in his one[26] name; in harmony they returned to him, seeking his approval for their actions. They therefore gave an account of their whole mission, recounting individual points with great alacrity: what they had taught, what they had done, and how things had gone according to their wishes. The Lord commended their faith but restrained their triumph, leading them to a solitary place,[27] to the desert tract of the city Bethsaida, that they might be restored and recover from such great labours. This sojourn was granted them, not to relax the mind with pleasures, but to nourish and renew the vigour of the spirit through private prayer, since they would soon have to hurry back to their work. Taking care of his body must indeed be a matter of small concern to the teacher of the gospel. Furthermore men who undertake the apostolic task are obliged to have dealings with strong men and weak, learned and unlearned, good and bad alike, so that losing some of that perfect composure is at times unavoidable. When that happens they must turn their minds to concentrated, private prayer, to the pure contemplation of heavenly things, so that they may regain their spiritual strength and soon return to aid their brothers. At that time, when they met with the Lord Jesus, a huge crowd of people was coming to him and going away again, like a seething tide, which far from giving respite to the apostles, who were tired from their journey, did not even allow them time to eat. Therefore they dismissed the crowd and boarded a ship, turning towards the coast near Bethsaida and retreating to a solitary place together with the Lord. Indeed,

even there they were unable to remain undetected for long. For the light of the evangelical truth cannot be hidden.

The sojourn in this case had no other effect than to rouse and sharpen men's yearning for them. Some had observed where they had retreated, that is, into the wilderness by the town of Bethsaida, and soon, when the news of their meeting place spread, a great multitude of all sorts of people made their way to them on foot from all the neighbouring towns, so that many of those journeying by foot arrived there before the Lord and his disciples, although they were speeded by oars. One might say the time had come when they prepared to enter the kingdom of God by might.[28]

When Jesus saw that an innumerable crowd of men had come together from all directions making the difficult journey on foot, far from withdrawing or driving them off as bothersome, he emerged from his retreat and met them. His purpose was to instruct his disciples in various ways and to teach them to promote the cause of the gospel readily and without delay. Thus our most gracious Jesus came forward and saw the large crowd, motley and disorderly, of children, men, and women, and was touched by pity, showing the true sorrow of his heart in his very eyes, mien, and his forefront, as they say,[29] thereby shaping and forming the love felt by the teacher of the gospel. They were thirsting for his salutary teaching. Proof of this was the speed with which they had completed a difficult journey. Love had added wings to their feet,[30] but they were like sheep wandering in all directions for lack of a good shepherd. For the priests, Pharisees, and scribes neglected their flock and fed themselves. Taking pity on the rude and simple crowd, Jesus began to take on the role of the faithful shepherd. First he restored their minds with the plentiful food of his holy doctrine;[31] soon he healed the sick whom they had brought with them.

When much time had been taken up with these things, and the situation itself required that the multitude be refreshed with food for the body as well, the disciples, following the example of their teacher's clemency,[32] reminded him: 'Lord, you see the infinite crowd that has come here without provisions. And this is a solitary place, and it is now past the time for refreshing the body. Hanging on your lips they have forgotten about themselves, nor can they be torn away from you. Therefore send them away that they may go to the nearest houses and villages and buy food to eat.' Then Jesus answered, teaching his men how to pasture the crowd:[33] 'Why do you not offer them food from your own provisions instead, for you are their future shepherds and must accustom yourselves to the role of shepherds?' The disciples did not immediately understand the drift of Jesus' words and answered according to their rude understanding: 'You are giving us instructions that are impossible to carry out, for you know how small are the

provisions with which we are equipped. Suppose we go and buy bread for the multitude for two hundred denarii, they will be far from getting their fill, indeed there will hardly be enough for each person to get a small bite.' Then Jesus said, gradually preparing their minds for the miracle: 'How many loaves of bread do you have?' When they had no ready answer, he told them: 'Go and find out what provisions you have.' They looked and reported back that there were five loaves of bread and two fish. It was not unknown to the Lord how many they had, but he wished his apostles to be aware how little it was so that they would recognize more readily the divine force in the miracle. And that they might all be more aware of the large number of people, he gave instructions to the apostles to have everyone settle down on the green grass, arranged in individual groups of one hundred or of fifty sitting together. The apostles obeyed the Lord and the people obeyed the apostles, such was their faith in the shepherd, Jesus. Jesus, then, took the five loaves and two fish and, as was his custom, lifted his eyes up to heaven, giving thanks to the Father, by whose kindness the cause of the gospel was progressing as it was. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to hand them out to the multitude. Similarly, he divided the fish into parts and gave them to his disciples to distribute them to everyone. All were refreshed and ate their fill. And so far were they from lacking anything that when the apostles collected the remnants after the meal, according to the Lord's instructions, they filled twelve baskets. The crowd numbered five thousand, not counting the women and children, a number that could easily be established, for they were grouped on the grass in companies.

Through this miracle Jesus prescribed to his apostles the pattern of pasturing the multitude with the food of the gospel word, and at the same time he relieved them from the worry of providing sustenance. Thus, whoever is a bishop and a shepherd of the Lord's flock must not think: 'I am a teacher of the divine law, I am a learned interpreter of the arcane scriptures, it is enough that I teach, that I give to the hungry people from my rich and well-stocked storehouse of knowledge.'[34] Rather inspect and see what meagre provisions you have in your house, which – whatever they amount to – you owe to the Lord. Give whatever means you have into the hands of Jesus, ask that he touch and divide them, then give to the people what he has rendered to you and in the manner that he has rendered it to you – as the Lord's food, not your own. Give it to the people without hesitation, without prejudice, without trusting in your own power – thus, finally, will it be a gospel meal. The hearts of the believers will find greater refreshment and satisfaction in the salutary food given them by a common man that that given them by a superstitious Pharisee or an arrogant philosopher or an eloquent orator who gives himself airs before the people with his rehearsed speech

and precise diction. And since Jesus had taught the apostles previously to come to the business of the gospel without forethought or provisions, the facts themselves now declared that they would lack nothing who are wholeheartedly intent on 'the kingdom of God and his justice' [Matt 6:33] – neglecting those temporary goods, concern for which greatly worries the common run of people – if only they have simple faith in the Lord Jesus. In comparison with the favours rendered to the people daily by our most gracious Lord it was a small favour to feed the hungry. It is a much greater kindness to pasture the spirit than to feed the stomach. Yet the crass multitude, in their topsy-turvy judgment, usually set the greatest store on those things that are least important.

Jesus knew that the crass multitude, having had their fill, was thinking of offering him the kingdom,[35] and he obliged his disciples (for they left their beloved Lord unwillingly) to board a ship, sail across the lake, and go ahead to Bethsaida while he himself dismissed the multitude. When the crowd had been dismissed he quietly withdrew to the mountain where in solitude he prayed to the Father that the business of the gospel, having begun well, might progress in like manner.

In the mean time night approached and the disciples were sailing out onto the lake without their teacher. And a storm arose. Indeed, how could it be other than night, when that sun, that 'light of the world' [John 8:12], Jesus, is not present? Of course the ship is in danger when Jesus is absent.[36] Of course the apostles were troubled when Jesus, that comforter of all men, was not with them. Of course adverse winds delay the successful outcome of human efforts unless Jesus advances them. Yes, he is often absent, but in the end he does not forsake his people. He seems to desert them for a while to exercise them in adversity and to teach them a firm faith in himself.[37] For now he had descended from the mountain and was standing on the shore, by himself. The apostles could not see him, but he saw the apostles. Thus we must not despair if things are in uproar and upheaval, having once conceived in our hearts the sure confidence that even when Jesus is nowhere in sight he will not fail his people in the time of need. For now he stood on the shore and saw them labouring at the oars with the wind against them. When they had thus fought for some time against the wind and waves of this world and were not far from despairing – it was now around the fourth watch of the night, that is, shortly before dawn – Jesus came to them, without the aid of a boat, gently walking across the water (for the element recognized its maker), and he advanced as if he wished to overtake them. For in this manner he sometimes allows his people to continue in adversity, giving the appearance of neglecting them although he never ceases caring for them.

When the apostles – forgetful of all the miracles they had seen – saw

him walking on the water through the darkness, they thought it impossible that the liquid element could support the solid, heavy body of a man,[38] and they suspected that it was a hollow spectre deluding their eyes with an empty illusion. Thus they took fright and cried out in fear. For all saw the likeness of Christ, but none could believe that it was Jesus. The Lord is terrible to those who believe him to be the avenger, who do not know that he is the Saviour. For he cannot be seen in the darkness of this world except when he himself secretly enters us.

Therefore he did not allow his disciples to be frightened any longer and addressed them in his familiar voice, saying: 'Take courage, it is I. Fear not.' He boarded the ship and joined the disciples, and at once the storm abated. Now their fear was replaced by wonder: How could a human body walk across the liquid element?

So dull-witted were the disciples, so rude, so forgetful, that they never thought of the miracle they had just seen – so many thousand people being fed on five loaves of bread and two fish. Such darkness was in their hearts that they thought it surprising that Jesus had walked across the water; though it was much more miraculous to have fed so large a number with so little food. So slow-minded did the Lord permit his men to be so that they might become accustomed to bear with the slow wits of weak men until they made progress.

At dawn they reached the shore. They anchored in an area called Gennesareth, in the harbour that had been their goal. As soon as Jesus stepped on land, some of the inhabitants standing by recognized him. For now the sun had risen and the night that had taken hold of the disciples' hearts had lifted.[39] For he was observed by many wherever he went. And now Jesus was known to many even by sight, but the fame of his miracles and teaching had spread much further. Next, those who had seen and recognized him immediately departed, as if they had come to spy, and fanned out over the whole region, announcing Jesus' presence. On receiving this news a large number began to bring their sick on stretchers. And wherever Jesus went, whether to houses, villages, or towns, there was present a crowd importuning him, more concerned about having their bodily diseases removed than their spiritual diseases healed; and labouring under various diseases they offered a pitiful sight in the marketplace[40] and begged Jesus, as he was passing by, to be allowed at least to touch the hem of his garment. Such was the commotion in the crowd, however, that not everyone was granted even that much. But this was not due to any difficulty on the part of Jesus, who did not hesitate even to touch a leper; on the contrary he was delighted by the display of their faith which he wished to be commended to all. And how would it not be commended to them? All who

succeeded in touching him were healed, whatever their disease. Those believers who touched the hem of his garment, which later fell to the men who crucified Jesus, were healed of their physical diseases. How much more earnestly must we all strive to touch Jesus himself with our heart and be healed of our spiritual diseases. Without faith, touching is of no effect. Those who dealt him blows, who bound him, who scourged him, who nailed him to the cross, touched Jesus' bare body, yet none of them profited from this touch. When you read the gospel you touch Christ, but if you read and reject it or read it inattentively, you touch Jesus in vain. Read it with sincere faith, and you will soon be healed. But you must ask Jesus to be allowed to touch him. He touches him in vain who is not touched by Jesus first. If you cannot obtain the recondite wisdom, with which Paul[41] speaks among the perfect, even a touch of the hem will restore you to health if pure faith is present. None of this can be provided by the hems of the Pharisees, however wide.[42] There is nothing so humble in the Lord Jesus that it cannot bestow salvation through faith.

Chapter 7

Such was the success of the gospel among the simple and believing crowd. But the same was not the case with scribes and Pharisees, who thought they had attained the height of religion and learning and regarded the common laymen as barely human.[1] For there is hardly any mention of priests except in plans to slay Jesus. And just as in comedies there is a change of scene so that by comparing and contrasting persons and facts each character may become clearer, so in the business of the gospel the Lord Jesus so governed the turns taken by each event that from the evident faith of simple men, and gentiles at that, everyone could see the scribes' and Pharisees' incurable wrongheadedness, although it was through the scribes and Pharisees that the unbelief of others ought to have been mended. Touching the hem of his garment was enough to heal common, unlearned men; the Pharisees did not mend their ways, even though they had knowledge of the prophets' oracles and listened to Christ's heavenly teaching so many times and had seen so many miracles performed. It was appropriate, therefore, that after all this had happened, some scribes and Pharisees came to that very place. Their kind commanded respect and admiration, and the more so because they had come from Jerusalem, which they gave out as the fountainhead of piety and holy teaching, whereas it is the source and capital of all ambition, hypocrisy, and ungodliness. Since they considered themselves just and learned, they did not come to learn or to be healed, but rather to slander.[2]

Behold, immediately they were given an opportunity to slander Jesus.

It was superstition that afforded an opportunity to these men, who were jealously observing ceremonies, for it is superstition that gives rise to almost all slander among men. The Jews call anything that is profane or impure 'common'; indeed they abhor all uncleanliness and are determined not to appear in possession of anything impure. Yet they measured purity by corporeal ceremonies rather than by purity of heart, which in the eyes of God is the only true form of purity. Some of these ceremonies were prescribed by Mosaic law, not to be observed rigorously and for ever, but partly that the unlearned and intractable people might for the time being become accustomed to obey divine commands, partly that they might gradually be taught by shadows and outlines, as it were, and led on to what is true piety residing in the heart. Thereafter some men who were not content with the decrees of the law had added innumerable petty rules of their own,[3] which the Pharisees enforced among the people more rigorously than the commands laid down by God to be observed by everyone and for eternity. And on nonsense like this they rested their claim to fame for holiness and induced in the people a foolish belief in their sanctity. And – what is even more wicked – they brought slanderous charges of unholiness against their neighbours on the basis of things that contribute nothing to true piety. For when they had seen some of Jesus' disciples take food with unwashed hands, that is, in their language, 'with common and impure' hands, they reproached them as falling short in their religious observance, and with them their teacher, who in their view had not instructed his disciples in a conscientious enough manner. They condemned their action, not because it was in itself sinful or forbidden by God, but because it was different from their own custom. This is, however, the worst criterion of judgment, to condemn something because you yourself are not in the habit of acting likewise. For it often happens that the silliest things gradually become accepted public custom[4] – which should not become a measure of piety, since purity must be measured against truth and the law of God.

By contrast the scribes, Pharisees, and almost all Jews pass judgment in the most foolish fashion, thinking that purity of heart lies in physical things. Thus they observe the custom handed down, not by God, but by their ancestors, so superstitiously that they do not take food without washing their hands first, and even at the risk of starving to death. And if they must take food several times a day, they wash their hands several times, and thus consider themselves clean enough to take food.

Indeed, if they return home from the marketplace, they do not take food unless they have washed their whole body, as if they had contracted some impurity from their contact with the people;[5] at the same time they have hearts sullied with hatred, jealousy, ambition, greed, deceit, and other

blights, but never think about cleansing them.[6] These and other similar rules that go beyond the law are handed down to them by their ancestors,[7] although the law itself forbids that anything should be added or subtracted from the divinely instituted commandments.[8] Later it was not enough simply to wash the body so as to appear cleaner, they also frequently washed their pitchers and jars, and even their beds. Nor could the Pharisees conceal the scab of their slanderous disposition. They did not argue with the disciples but approached the Lord himself as if a heinous crime had been committed: 'Why,' they asked, 'do the disciples who follow you and rely on your teaching take food with unwashed hands, failing to observe the custom instituted by our ancestors?' Wishing to teach us that no kind of slander is more pestilential than when someone under the pretext of holiness finds fault with his neighbour who does good, Jesus sharply rebuked their wickedness and feigned justice: 'Your deeds,' he said, 'show that Isaiah rightly and justly prophesied about you hypocrites, for you have the outward appearance of holiness, but in your hearts you are full of iniquity. For through Isaiah God utters this complaint: "With their lips this people honours me, but their hearts are far from me" [29:13]. And as they themselves live, so they teach others to live. I have no regard for that cleanliness of bodies and household stuff; I demand cleanliness of the spirit. They worship me in vain with this kind of feigned godliness, showing it off as a great thing in which there is perfect godliness, and teaching human laws which commend no man to God, and by their superstitious observance holding the laws of God in contempt. The difference between human and divine law must be as great as is the difference between man and God. "God is spirit" [John 4:24], and what is spiritual is eternal and must never be neglected. Whatever is corporeal is temporary. If it is right to neglect the ceremonies prescribed by God whenever love for your neighbour counsels you to do so, how much more inappropriate is it to violate God's command on account of petty human rules.

'It is a wrong kind of piety and an ungodly godliness to be superstitious in observing things handed down to you by your ancestors according to their whim and to neglect those things that God taught. You place the sum of piety in washing your hands, cups, and pitchers, and in other similar things that commend you to the people through a false image of holiness, and for this sham reputation you have more regard than for the authority of God. For you love yourselves and seek neither the glory of God nor the welfare of the people, even though you call yourselves their leaders and teachers. Thus it is not surprising that you nullify and abolish the laws given by God to be observed by all and for eternity, only to leave standing the authority of human laws that give you authority and profit. Is this not what you

manifestly do? Did not God through Moses lay down the command "Honour your father and your mother. And whosoever speaks ill of his father and mother will die a death" [Ex 20:12]? This is what God teaches us more than once and repeats over and over again and inculcates in the hearts of all men: that children should help their parents when they are burdened by old age or are needy or hard pressed by some other misfortune, and should repay them for the nourishment they dutifully provided. The law of nature commands the same. It is even implanted in some animals, for example in storks.[9] You, however, think of your own advantage, and with your false teaching overthrow the teaching of God, demanding that what God wished so earnestly should yield to your sham teaching. God himself clearly says: "Honour your father and mother." You dare to say the opposite: "Do not honour your father and mother." You may not say as much, but you demonstrate it in your deeds. Your ungodliness is the more wicked, the more hidden it is under the aspect of piety. For in order to fill your treasury with money to support your luxury and pride, you induce men by every trick at your command to donate more to the temple, even by defrauding their parents, whom according to the law of God they ought to have aided in their need. You make them believe that the law has been satisfied, falsely arguing that what was consecrated to the temple was consecrated to God, and God was the true father of all men.[10] Thus, you say, he who gives money to the treasury need not give anything to his needy parents, for he has satisfied the law; at the same time you frighten off parents by your superstition, so that they dare not demand from their sons what appears to have been given to God once and for all, fearing to become guilty of sacrilege.[11] But God does not need your money, nor is this money employed for God's glory – it is spent on your use;[12] and if it is used to build a temple, no temple is so holy to God that for its sake he would wish parents to be forsaken by their children. Is it not true that by such false doctrine you mislead sons so that they refuse to aid their parents, and frighten parents so that they do not dare touch what has been consecrated to the temple? And do you not, while building up your resources, undermine the law of God? This I have adduced as an example you cannot deny. But you sin not only in this respect, but in many other respects also you act as you do in this case. God's law is: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" [Lev 19:18]. But you build up a case of slander against me and my disciples, basing it on petty rules about ablutions handed down by men, obviously without consideration for divine law.'

By this private conversation the Pharisees were restrained rather than cured. Jesus then called the crowd together once more, for he wished to give them a warning regarding these matters, lest in future they be drawn away from evangelical sincerity through Pharisaical customs. 'Listen, everyone,'

he said, 'and understand. You have seen the accusation of impiety aimed at me because my disciples touched and ate bread without washing their hands, as if anyone eating such food were contaminated in the eyes of God. A man's purity or impurity does not lie in external, but in internal things, nor can the spirit be sullied by corporeal things. Moreover nothing external entering the body of a man can make him impure before God, but what is internal and comes from inside a man proves him impure.'

By speaking in such riddles the Lord Jesus gave the crowd an opportunity to examine the meaning of his words. And to make them more diligent, he added: 'Whosoever has ears to hear, let him listen' – indicating thereby that this song was sung in vain to the deaf Pharisees.[13]

When the crowd had been dismissed and he had withdrawn into a house, the disciples asked him in private to explain to them the parable about the difference between things entering a man and leaving him. To set the example of a faithful and diligent teacher, Jesus first sharpened their attention with gentle admonition, then explained the hidden meaning of the parable:[14] 'What,' he said, 'do even you, whom I have chosen to teach the others, lack understanding? Indeed, you should have been able to guess the meaning on the basis of all the many parables that I have explained to you. Do you not understand that the purity or impurity of a man cannot be judged by things that enter him from without? What enters by the mouth does not go into the heart, but into the stomach and from there into the bowels. Hence, whatever is impure is secreted so that all food is pure to the eater, for nature purifies what is impure. But those things that come from inside a man cause and reveal his impurity. The spirit resides in the soul, and in the spirit lies true purity or impurity. Thus a man who washes his hands is not immediately made pure, but rather he who has a cleansed and pure heart. Therefore those things which come from within truly reveal whether or not a man is pure. For it is from the innermost recesses of the heart that evil thoughts, adultery, rape, and murder arise, as well as theft, avarice, fraud, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil and jealous eye,[15] spiteful criticism, arrogance, and foolishness. None of these vices are introduced by food taken with unwashed hands, rather they have their origin in the man himself, that is, in his heart. When they come out into the open, they reveal him as truly impure because he has a heart sullied with so much filth. Even if the blemishes lie hidden in his heart, a man is still impure before God, who can see the recesses of the heart; but if they are obvious in his speech and deeds, they not only attest to their impure origin, but often also sully others as they creep into the hearts of the listeners and spectators through their ears and eyes.[16] Therefore make it your first concern to have a pure heart, and it will not matter whether you take food with washed or unwashed hands.'

When this had been concluded, Jesus changed his abode, indicating how weary he was of the Judaic religion, which is evaluated almost entirely on the basis of observance of corporeal things and is confined within the very narrow limits of Judaea.[17] He indicated also how he thirsted for the unlimited number of gentiles among whom he was to be worshipped 'in spirit and in truth' [John 4:23]. Thus he left that place and journeyed to the region of the Tyrians and Sidonians, but as a furtive visitor, because of the ill will of the Jews; for they regarded the Tyrians and Sidonians as abominable dogs and would not have tolerated Jesus bringing his gospel teaching to them. Thus he did not show himself in public, as was his custom among the Jews, but instead entered a house as if he wished to lie hidden, though he could not have remained hidden. The fame of his words and deeds had now spread widely also outside Judaea's borders, as if it was intended even then to be broadcast to all the world. Thus the glory of evangelical piety is best spread if it pursues him who flees.

For a Canaanite[18] woman came from her home town on hearing news of Jesus, and having immediately conceived great faith in him, she hurried to Jesus, and when she was finally admitted into his presence, she threw herself down at his feet. She was not of the Jewish religion, but a pagan;[19] not of Jewish descent, but a Syrophoenician. You recognize the manifest type of the church soon to be constituted of gentiles.[20] The Jews cast Jesus out; the Syrophoenician woman left her home and set out to meet Jesus. We come to Jesus in vain if we have not left behind our former sins, to which we have become accustomed. We must journey forth from our abode to come to the abode in which Jesus resides.

This woman had at home a daughter beset by an evil spirit. The people there are given to worshipping idols. The mother, then, asked Jesus to free her daughter from the spirit. How much more perfect was the gentile woman's faith than that of the chief of the synagogue. Jesus, however, wished to make the woman's faith more conspicuous in the eyes of all and answered, affecting a Jewish manner: 'Let the sons be fed first. For it is not proper that I should take the sons' bread and cast it before dogs.' For the Jews take pride in being the only children of God. They regard the other nations that are unacquainted with the Jewish faith as dogs. Jesus calls the power of the gospel 'bread,'[21] for it cures all ills with heavenly teaching and pure faith, and it casts from the heart all kinds of spirits. The woman was not offended by these insulting words, which seemed to have been spoken with the intent of driving her away, but rather turned them into an argument in favour of obtaining her wish. 'You are right, my Lord,' she said. 'We are not jealous of the Jews because they have the honour of sharing the table of their rich Father as sons and eat their fill of holy bread. Yet the dogs are allowed to

eat the crumbs that fall to the ground from the table of the sons.' As if won over by the woman's great faith, forbearance, humbleness,[22] and perseverance, Jesus answered: 'By your reply you extract a gift before its time. Go home, your daughter is now freed from the demon.'

The woman believed him, left joyfully, and found Jesus' words true: her daughter was resting on the bed, free now from the vexation of the demon. Yes, the mother's faith had wrenched from Jesus the gift of health. The evil demon had been cast out and she had found peace of mind. For tranquillity is the companion of innocence. Today also the congregation of the faithful comes to Jesus in this very manner, interceding with him on behalf of those who are vexed by idolatry, ambition, wrath, covetousness, and the mad desire for war as by an impure spirit.[23] But the Jews thought it shameful that those who a little while ago had been driven to all kinds of sin by the arbitrary will of the demons should suddenly through evangelical grace be admitted to a position of honour and to the fellowship of the sons of God. They did not realize that honour is due, not according to kinship, but according to the fervour and constancy of faith in the Lord Jesus. Christ was promised to the sons of Israel and the descendants of Abraham; but all who imitate Abraham's faith are his 'descendants.'[24] All who refrain from demanding that the kingdom of heaven open up to them on account of their merits, who try rather to take it by the force of their evangelical faith are 'sons of Israel.'[25] For 'Israel' in Hebrew means 'a man strong against God.'[26] For the gentiles, who previously were sullied by all kinds of sin and had no good works through which they might lay claim to the heavenly kingdom, from which they were excluded by the justice of God, broke in through the window of mercy, and through steadfastness of faith, as though with a sort of weapon, they opened for themselves an access, breaking down the walls of the heavenly kingdom. The time had not yet come to call the gentiles openly to share the heavenly kingdom, but the Lord repeatedly rehearsed this sharing nevertheless, as if he were eager to anticipate what he most keenly thirsted for.

When the Lord had secretly cast this seed among the Tyrians, Sidonians, and Canaanites, he retraced his steps and once again journeyed to Lake Galilee, passing Sidon and proceeding past the region of Decapolis, where he had previously healed the possessed.

When he arrived there, they brought to him a deaf-mute man, a wretched sight to behold. For whoever is deaf by birth is necessarily also mute. But more wretched still is the deaf man who does not have ears to hear God's word; worse is the mute man who does not have a tongue to confess his own sinfulness and the mercy of God.[27] The beginning of faith and salvation lies in hearing; salvation is perfected in oral confession.[28] Although

the Jews attended to Jesus' words every day, they heard, yet did not hear him. Like the asp closing its ears to the voices of the wise enchanter,[29] they were unwilling to believe what they heard. Likewise, they have a tongue to slander, but not to profess their faith in a salutary manner. What can a wretch do who has no tongue to ask for salvation from the Lord, who has no ears to hear the voice of Jesus, which rouses even the dead? They who had a tongue and ears came to the man's aid. They led him to Jesus. They implored his mercy that he might deign to lay his hands on him. It pleased the most merciful Lord that even vicarious faith would help the sinner. When a catechumen is brought to Jesus, he ceases to do evil, he ceases to speak evil, but he has not yet learnt to do good, he has not yet learnt to profess the goodness of the gospel. Who has this ability unless Jesus lays his hands on him? Man labours in vain unless Jesus' secret power is joined to his. It was in the Lord's power to restore health to the deaf-mute by a simple word,[30] but the matter was set before us in this form, for just as Jesus' words often take the form of a parable, so his actions, too, are frequently parables.

He took the man and led him apart from the crowd. Anyone whom Jesus takes with him, anyone whom he removes from the tumult of this world is saved.[31] He put his fingers into his ears and touched his tongue with his saliva. Salvation is at hand when Jesus deigns to touch our spiritual ears with his spirit, that is, God's finger,[32] and the saliva of heavenly wisdom,[33] that is, Jesus himself,[34] issues forth from the mouth of the Father on high and deigns to touch our spiritual tongue so that we may taste the things that are of God. For the sensation of taste does not come about without liquid – and indeed human saliva is corrupt and wrong in its judgment. Divine saliva not only loosens the tongue but also opens up the eyes of those who were born blind, when it is mixed with earth and smeared on the eyes,[35] whereas the saliva of the philosophers and Pharisees makes a man blinder still. The evangelical doctors act similarly. They take us aside, remove us from the crowd and the well-travelled highway on which many journey to their ruin, and they recall us into the circle of a small flock. They insert their fingers into our ears when they call us away from reliance on fleeting things and urge us to embrace the heavenly doctrine. They put saliva on our tongue when they exhort us to profess the faith of the gospel. They lay on their hands when they impart the Holy Spirit in baptism, through which sins are absolved and innocence conferred. Yet the teacher does all these external things in vain unless Christ is effective within us and sends his divine power from heaven.

Jesus wished to express this metaphorically: having taken the man aside, he put his fingers into his ears and spat on his tongue, raised his eyes to heaven, and sighed. This was not a sigh of despair, but one deploring human misery.[36] For what is more wretched than the man whose spiritual

ears are so completely filled with earthly desires that they cannot hear the word of God, whose tongue is so covered and infected with sinful emotions that it cannot taste heavenly love and has no voice to confess his sinfulness, none to proclaim the mercy of God? Thus Jesus' sigh reminds us of our former state – but looking up to heaven he takes away despair, indicating the source from which help is provided[37] and whom we must thank for it. Whereas in the past we had ears eagerly listening to slander, filthy conversation, and foolish stories, listening to the teaching of the Pharisees, the pronouncements of philosophers, and the suggestions of Satan, we now keep them open to receive the heavenly doctrine of the gospel. Whereas in the past we had a tongue infected with carnal saliva, so that the ambrosia of heavenly philosophy had a sickening taste, a tongue so tied with Satan's bonds that it could not acknowledge its own sins or proclaim the glory of God, we now profess that by our own merit we deserve nothing but hell, that all is owed to God's bounty if we are adopted and receive the name and inheritance of God's sons.[38] Thus let the priest, too, sigh rather than rage against the sins of others, let him grieve rather than be angry; let him not claim the power of absolving sins for himself, but let him look up to heaven, profess and attest that everything achieved through the sacramental rites emanates from divine, not from human, power. Jesus says '*Ephata*,' which in Hebrew means 'open up.' The word was immediately effective. For soon the man's ears were opened, his tied tongue was loosened, and he spoke without hesitation. They had open ears who, when the Lord said to them 'Come, follow me,' left everything behind and followed him. They had a free tongue who received the Holy Spirit and spoke of the greatness of God in diverse tongues[39] and who, when the officials forbade them henceforth to proclaim the name of Jesus, answered: 'Ought we to obey God rather than men? – judge for yourselves.'[40]

These things were done apart from the crowd. For we must not make the profane crowd witness to the evangelical initiation, lest they mock what they do not yet understand. Jesus therefore instructed the man not to tell anyone. Not that he wished his deed to remain unknown, but the fact itself would proclaim his heavenly power better than any human proclamation could. Everyone knew the deaf-mute. Now he could hear and speak fluently. Thus, he proclaimed Jesus' good deed without saying anything. Moreover, Jesus here bears the image of man in order to educate men. Let man keep silent about whatever great deed he has done so that man's glory be kept hidden and God's glory be proclaimed. It is perilous to praise man, but it is just to proclaim God's power and goodness. Yet man's glory is not passed over in silence either – if there can be human glory; indeed, we often find that the more it is shunned, the more it attaches itself to a man.

However, the man of the gospel must maintain the attitude that, as far as he is concerned, he wants to be known only to God. And by this very fact he will be more worthy of being praised by all. For he who seeks glory among men is by that very fact unworthy of glory. Furthermore, by forbidding those who brought the mute man to tell anyone what had happened Jesus in fact provoked them all the more to proclaim it among all men. And thus they admired the greatness of Jesus even more because he could do such things yet did not ask for a reward and did not even wish to enjoy the glory deriving from such a great deed. Just as it is characteristic of a true benefactor not to demand praise for his good deed, so it is incumbent on the grateful man to return thanks the more eagerly the less the benefactor expects gratitude.

Thus those men spoke of Jesus everywhere, saying: 'He does all things well. He gives deaf men back their hearing and mute men their tongue.' Such praise is only fit for God. No mortal can do all things well. All miracles worked by Jesus were to our benefit. If you consider the carnal appearance of things, there were many more splendid things than giving a deaf man hearing or a mute man speech, but according to the spiritual meaning the greatest blessing lies in this: that a man may hear with his ears the gospel message, that he may speak of what he has learnt and what he believes.

Chapter 8

By various examples the Lord Jesus encouraged his disciples always to do good, the most important part of which is to pasture the unlearned people with the doctrine of the gospel. Accordingly he repeated the example of pasturing so that they would not forget what was inculcated in them so many times. For it happened at one time that a huge crowd of people had come together to see Jesus in the wilderness, bringing with them many who were in the grip of various diseases. Our most merciful Lord healed all diseases of the body and indeed fed their minds with heavenly speech. By his readiness to do good he won over the crowd's hearts so completely that they could not be torn away from him. While they were all wholeheartedly intent on the kingdom of God, it did not occur to them to think of provisions, so much so that while their bodies were healed and their minds fed, they were at risk of dying of famine. This, too, is a powerful weapon, especially in the opinion of the multitude. Jesus, who wished by this very circumstance to teach the apostles that those who clung to him with sincere faith would lack nothing, said to them: 'I feel pity for the crowd, for behold, they have now been with me for three days and have nothing to eat. If I let them go away hungry, as they are now, there is danger that they will collapse on the road before reaching their homes. For some of them have come a long way.'

With these words Jesus kindled the spirits of his disciples in preparation for the miracle to come. But the disciples, inexperienced as they were and once again forgetful that Jesus had previously fed the crowd with five loaves of bread and two fish, answered in this manner: 'Even if we had enough money, how can anyone here in the wilderness provide bread for this immense crowd that has gone without food for two days and is famished?' You hear the voice of men who have a short memory and little faith. Jesus in turn said: 'How many loaves of bread do you have?' They inspected their provisions and said: 'Seven.' Indeed, this was truly the bread of the gospel: bread made not of barley but of wheat, like that mentioned before on which the sons are fed and which is not cast to the dogs.[1] Barley, too, has its kernel, but it is covered by a protective sheath; Moses' Pentateuch, too, had a spiritual sense, but it was covered with a sheath of figures. The number of loaves grew, while the cover was drawn away, meaning that grace was increased and something taken away from ceremonies.

Although these provisions did indeed seem insufficient for such a great multitude, Jesus ordered all to settle down on the ground. A blessed meal, when a hungry crowd settles down at the command of Jesus! This is the case whenever the people come together in the basilica,[2] keen to hear the word of the gospel, about to hear Jesus speaking through the mouth of a good preacher. For many come to hear the holy sermon in the spirit of common folk going to a theatre to see a secular play. The man who wants to be nourished with the bread of Jesus must settle down on the plain ground. He must come with his emotions composed.[3] Those who lie idly on the beds of Pharisaical doctrine are not worthy of this food. 'Why are dust and ashes proud?' [Sir 10:9] Why do you pride yourself on vain philosophy? Why do you trust in things that cannot bring salvation? Know yourself, fling yourself on the ground whence you have come forth. Let the carnal desires in you fall silent, thus you will be nourished with Christ's food.

What I pointed out was done. The crowd was now settled on the ground. Now watch and observe what Jesus does: He took the seven loaves of bread and, to show that whatever leads to the salvation of men comes from God, he raised his eyes up to heaven (for there lives the Father, and from him we are told to seek this, our daily bread) and gave thanks. Jesus did not claim responsibility for the gift himself, lest ordinary man claim it for himself. For he could have claimed it, being equal to the Father; though even according to his divine nature he owes to the Father whatever he is and has. But his action was more appropriate as an instructive example for us. After he had given thanks, he broke the bread and gave the pieces to his disciples. And as they received it, they in turn distributed it among the crowd. The word of a man is

not efficacious unless it is first touched by the hands of Christ. You may possess eloquence, the wisdom of philosophy, talent, a knowledge of the holy books, of civil and canon law: give everything you have over into the hands of Christ first. Let him consecrate what you have, let him break the bread, then give it to the people, not as your own but as a gift you have received from him. For there are people who break the bread of Holy Scripture, not as they should, but twisting it to fit the desires of men, not the will of Jesus. For Jesus breaks it to satisfy the hungry crowd, not to serve the ambition and avarice of princes. Whoever teaches the gospel for the purpose of gain or human glory or other human desires does not receive the bread broken by Christ. Therefore let us imitate Christ's disciples in preaching Christ's word.

They distributed the pieces of bread among the crowd as they were bidden. Someone may object: 'What? Not even a side dish? Does the meal consist of bread only?' We need not add much to the bread of the gospel. For nothing is more efficacious, nothing more pleasant. And yet, out of his goodness, the host added a few fish. Perhaps the apostles will add some epistles.[4] But this is insignificant and of very little importance compared to the provisions of the gospel. This allowance has been made for the sake of certain fastidious people, but we must not ask for more.[5] This side dish must be enough lest someone proceed to add of his own whatever pleases him, making it a human meal rather than a meal of Jesus Christ. For Jesus consecrated in addition these little fish, albeit few and small, and had them distributed. If he had not given instructions, the distribution would not have been in order. Do not complain about the frugality of the side dish, for if you allow the cakes of the orators to be brought in, or the magnificent courses of the philosophers, or the tasteless stews of the Pharisees, you run the risk of losing your taste for the bread of the gospel when the palate is affected by so many side dishes. If we are to depart contented from the evangelical meal, the evangelical doctors must imitate the apostles, and the congregation must imitate that crowd. And what did the apostles do? They distributed the bread among the crowd just as they had received it from the Lord, without hesitation, without discussion. Similarly the crowd received it peacefully and without grumbling, taking what was given in good part. Thus it came to pass that not only did they all have their fill but also seven baskets were filled with leftover pieces that remained after they had been fed.

And to make you wonder all the more, there were about four thousand men eating to their heart's content. Indeed such is the opulence of the evangelical word. Whenever there comes a proud doctor endowed with learning, literature, and legal and constitutional knowledge, with ample resources in every respect, clamouring that the time will be too short for his

speech, that the congregation will not be able to understand such subtle issues, that he is overwhelmed by his copious theme and in doubt where best to begin – whenever such a speaker is present, do we not usually see the congregation depart hungry? There is no question of anything being left over. But Jesus' frugal and parsimonious repast yielded seven baskets of leftovers. For the bounty and abundance of the evangelical meal does not lie in a multitude of academic disciplines comparable to a variety of dishes so manifold that it induces surfeit, or in spice mixed together out of all of man's literature, but in the power of the word handed down by God and dispensed with good faith. Thus Jesus dismissed them well satisfied. For this, too, is valuable, to leave Jesus' banquet in a happy spirit. Men are dismissed in this manner when they give thanks, that is, when they store God's favour in their hearts and absorb what they have received, when they return home and, just as their bodies gain weight, display in their deeds the knowledge they have gained.

After these events, Jesus forthwith hastened elsewhere. The shepherd must not remain with the crowd except to aid it. He had healed the sick, he had taught them, he had fed them when they were in danger of famine – to stay on afterwards would seem like waiting for thanks. The poverty and need of the people must be relieved by all means, whether it be a physical or a spiritual need that besets them. But such is the disposition of the people that they give the most emphatic thanks for the smallest favour. It is a very small favour to nourish the body; it is a greater deed to heal it; but the greatest favour is to heal and feed the mind with holy teaching. No one offered the kingship to Jesus for his teaching or for his healing of diseases: they offered it to him for food. Lest this happen again, Jesus left the crowd forthwith, embarked on a ship with the disciples whom he had chosen as his constant companions, and went into the region of Dalmanutha (or Magedan).[6]

To give a repeated demonstration of their unbelief, the Pharisees, too, set out for that region, not to be healed but to slander Jesus. For they were jealous of his miracles and they were jealous of the people who had been aided by so many good deeds. Therefore they began a dispute with Jesus, arguing that the miracles wrought by him were not the work of a heavenly power since they were common and base. If he wanted the Pharisees – men far above the crowd and celestial,[7] so to speak – to believe him, he must produce some sign from heaven, like Moses, who obtained manna from heaven[8] or Elijah, whose prayers brought about a fire that suddenly rained down from heaven and consumed everything in a holocaust[9] – the wood and even the water that filled the cisterns near the altar.

The Lord knew that they would slander anything he did, for it was more likely that they would attribute to Beelzebub any sign given from above

where the princes of these dark regions reside than things that could be seen with the eyes, heard with the ears, and touched by the hands[10] – especially since it was a common feat of magicians to produce sudden showers or elicit thunder and lightning or bring on hail and thunderstorms.[11] Knowing this he heaved a sigh, showing how grieved he was by their stubborn unbelief. And he said under his breath, as if in anger: 'How wrongminded this nation is – they have seen so many miracles and they require yet another sign, as if they had seen nothing so far.' Then he turned to the Pharisees and said: 'This much I say to you: no sign will be given to your nation which it demands from heaven to tempt me. Instead an unexpected sign will be given you from the underworld. This will be the sign of Jonah.[12] For when he had been swallowed up and was believed dead, suddenly three days later and against all expectations he emerged from the whale's belly. In the same manner will the Son of man, hidden for three days in the bowels of the earth, come forth, risen from death contrary to all your expectations.'

When the Pharisees did not understand his words, he left them as being past hope and returned to the ship, crossing the lake. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ, who was thirsting for the salvation of man, changed his abode without delay, seeking not sacrifice, of which he had long grown tired, but faith. This, however, he scarcely found on earth, and nowhere was it rarer than among priests, scribes, Pharisees, and the leaders of the people. So little does evangelical faith have in common with men who have the comforts of this world at their disposal.

During their journey it did not occur to the disciples that by an oversight they had not looked after their bread supply. For they had only one loaf with them on board ship. When Jesus saw that they felt secure through forgetfulness rather than faith in him, he rekindled their concern by giving them a warning. Yet such concern arose not so much from a lack of faith as from thoughtlessness and forgetfulness, which is human. While they were concentrating on Jesus' words and deeds, they were not thinking about bread. And it was to our benefit, too, that they kept forgetting about the five loaves of bread that satisfied a multitude, that it might be more deeply impressed on our minds that those who cling to Christ with a sincere heart will lack nothing. The ship that has only one bread – Jesus Christ,[13] that is – is well taken care of. Thus he wished to arouse their concern so that he might cure it. Teaching them, he said: 'Take diligent care to keep away from the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.'[14] They heard these words but did not understand them. It brought back to them a concern about food provisions. Therefore they began to whisper among themselves: We have no bread. For one thing reminds us of another. They heard the word 'leaven' and remembered that they had forgotten about the bread. And

so they whispered quietly as if they had gone wrong through thoughtlessness because they had bought no bread.

Yet whenever we forget about corporeal things in our ardour for heavenly things this forgetfulness is good in the eyes of Jesus. They were afraid that they would be reproached for their carelessness, but they were reproached for their needless worry. 'What are you arguing among yourselves,' said the Lord, 'in your concern about having no bread? You have been taught by so many admonitions, directed by so many examples, given so many warnings – do you still fail to notice and understand? Are your hearts still blinded? And do you fail to see when you have eyes? And do you fail to hear when you have ears? Can you not at least retain in your memory what has a little while ago been displayed before your eyes on two occasions? Not long ago you saw me break five loaves of bread. You distributed them, and they were sufficient for five thousand men, and they had their fill of it. And how many baskets of leftovers did you collect thereafter?' 'Twelve,' they said. 'Then, similarly, when seven loaves of bread sufficed for four thousand, how many baskets did you fill with leftovers?' 'Seven,' they said. Then Jesus said: 'How is it that you who have been taught so often in so many ways still fail to understand that concern about food is superfluous? For when I warned you to avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod I did not refer to their bread but to their teaching, which must be shunned, lest they lead you too astray, just as they lead astray the crowd. A little leaven affects the whole dough.[15] When it is bad then all the dough is ruined. They give the appearance of piety, although they are very far from true piety. And they disagree among each other in their opinions because both make shameful mistakes. The Herodians often err because of their ignorance of Holy Writ, being unwilling to believe in the future resurrection of bodies,[16] because they believe only in what they can see; the Pharisees know Scripture, but are blinded by evil desires and thus resist true piety. You must in every way beware of their teaching lest you yourselves also become infected and thereafter infect others by the contagiousness of infection. Accept instead the bread made with the leaven of the gospel, so that you may distribute this pure bread to others as well.'

In the mean time they arrived and made fast at Bethsaida. And behold, there is no place that does not offer an occasion for showing mercy. Here in some village they brought Jesus a blind man and asked him to touch him. The blind man asked for nothing, but was recommended to the Lord by the prayers of others. No one can seek salvation from the Lord Jesus unless he is first touched by him. For the first touch makes a man know himself. This man did not have sties or poor sight: he was in the grip of the darkest blindness.

Men who are so completely blind need to be led to Jesus by others, who procure from him by their prayer the efficacious touch of his hand.

Jesus, who could have healed any blind man by a word,[17] did not immediately restore him to health, so that he might show to his disciples by a figure the struggle necessary to be able to lead men to the recognition of the truth when they have already grown old in their error. Such was the blindness that possessed the gentiles, who had for so many centuries embraced the worship of idols, considering it the sum of piety; such was the blindness of the Jews, who had taken over from their forefathers a superstition to which they had become accustomed over so many years that they were unable to relinquish it. When meeting such a blind man what will the apostolic man have to do? Mark what Jesus did. First he took the blind man by the hand. O blessed guide! And where did he lead the man? Out of the village. The man who follows the multitude[18] sets before himself the worst example. Those who say: 'I am not the only one who does this, everyone else does it too, I'd rather be foolish with the people than wise with the few' deceive themselves to their own peril. Blind men are exposed to many dangers when they mingle with the crowd. They are ridiculed, bumped into, they run into things, are pushed around and often trip and fall. Therefore the blind man must first of all be led apart from the crowd. With such a guide he now walks safely.

What did the Lord do next? He spat on his eyes, then touched them with his hands. Still his eyes did not open: so deep was his blindness. Then Jesus asked the man whether he discerned anything. At the sound of the voice he raised his eyes, as if he had found some slight hope, and said: 'I see men, like trees, walking about.' Those who do not yet have a clear view of the gospel light see everything in this world larger than life. They see a rich man: he seems to them a plane tree. They see an official or a prince and think they are looking at an apple tree or a cypress. The see a bearded Stoic[19] or a Pharisee decked out with broad hems and phylacteries and believe it is a fig tree.[20] But when their eyes are cleared and things present themselves as they are, then finally they realize the insignificance of those things that seemed huge to them when they had faulty eyesight.

But the Lord, who does not snuff out the smoking wick,[21] did not leave the blind man's side until he had attained perfect vision. Again he touched his eyes with his hand and soon the man began to be more clear-sighted. He reached the point where he saw everything clearly. Blessed is he whose soul's eyes are illuminated by Christ and who sees everything clearly; to whom the things that appear great to the world seem insignificant, those that seem beautiful to the world, ugly, and those that seem worthless to the

world, great. Whoever you are, teacher of the gospel, do not look down on the weakness of those who are beginners in the gospel philosophy. It is sufficient at first that they be led out of the village, that is, that they leave their former sins behind; next, the evangelical doctrine must touch them to give sight to their eyes. First the rudiments of evangelical perfection must be taught to them, and when they have been initiated they are baptized. Next, great mysteries and a more solid doctrine must be communicated to them, which will make them discern everything clearly. This is what the ministers of Jesus Christ will do, but Christ by his hidden power will deign to touch the eyes of the blind man that he may receive sight.

When the good deed had been done, the Lord told the man to return to his house, forbidding him to tell anyone what had happened. Whenever the Lord commands a man to keep silent about what has happened, he teaches the priests that they must not seek glory among men if they have been successful in discharging their evangelical duty. But if he sometimes commands his deed to be broadcast, he teaches the man who has been healed of his sins to acknowledge his wickedness and to praise God's goodness, which alone was responsible for his change. Furthermore, to return to one's own home means that after we have received the heavenly grace we must not forget our former state[22] and that we will relapse into this state if we are not saved by God's favour. If, on his return home, a man happens to pass through a village – that is, meet up with a sinful multitude that would rather deride than believe him, he must not rashly boast of the mystery of his initiation. Jesus had said to him: 'Go to your house, and when you enter a village, tell no one.' Earlier on Jesus had cured a deaf-mute. He heard the gospel message and began to speak clearly. And a little while earlier he had healed a blind man who, when he could see clearly, was told to keep silent among the ungodly men. For when he returns home, the fact itself will be eloquent among those who had known him as a blind man. For there is a time to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, and there is a time when it is better to conceal it.[23]

Now Jesus made trial of his disciples to see how far they had progressed spiritually, whether what had been done corporeally through dark figures in others had happened spiritually to them. Thus he left Bethsaida and together with the disciples arrived in the small town of Caesarea, called Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples what the common run of men thought of him, for after so many miracles had been performed, even the people ought to have formed a wonderful opinion of Christ. Not that Christ did not know what the people were thinking of him,[24] but he wished to show us what constitutes the evangelical faith that saves

the faithful and how different it is from the inconstant and variable opinion of the people. 'Who do the people say I am?' he asked.

The disciples answered plainly, telling what they had heard: 'Some suspect that you are John the Baptist come back to life; others that you are Elijah the Tishbite, whose coming was promised by the prophet Malachi;[25] others again, that you are not Elijah but another of the old prophets come to life.' That is what those people thought who had the highest opinion of Jesus, for being men they could not think of him as more than a man. They thought that he was a great man; they had no notion as yet that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. Yet this was somehow the first rudimentary step to professing the gospel before the time had come to reveal the mystery to the people; but once it has been made public no one can find salvation unless he believes that Jesus is the author of all salvation. For the source of evangelical salvation is a divinely inspired belief in Christ, the Son of God. To elicit this confession from the apostles, he said: 'I see that the people are wavering and have no firm opinion of me. Yet they are thinking more highly of me than those who say that I am no more than a carpenter's son or those who say that I have gone mad and who are after me to throw me in bonds or those who say that I have the spirit of Beelzebub. But you who know me intimately, who have been the constant witnesses of all I have done and taught – who do you say I am?' Then Peter, first to proclaim the gospel, answering in the name of all,[26] said: 'You are that Messiah who was once promised by the prophets, the son of the living God,[27] through whom alone salvation was promised to the world.' When the Lord highly approved of this profession as being divinely inspired, and when he praised it as blessed and pronounced it to be the cornerstone of the congregation and evangelical community which no satanic force would ever shake,[28] he warned them not to divulge before its time what they knew by the inspiration of the Father. It was advantageous that there should be a hope for the Messiah, a belief that he would come shortly, but it was not yet advantageous that Jesus should be recognized as the Messiah. For thus it was conducive to our instruction, teaching us that glory springs from humble beginnings.

Because of human affections the disciples shied away from the suffering of their Lord, yearning for him to be held in esteem by all. But eternal wisdom had planned a different order of events. Thereafter Jesus began to teach them what he would suffer before his greatness would become known to the world. 'The Son of man,' he said, 'of whom you think so highly must be subjected to much ignominy and suffering, must be pronounced guilty by the scribes, priests, and leaders of the people. In the end he must die a shameful death, like a criminal, so that nothing in the

world can be more dejected and desperate than he. But you must not lose courage. Always keep in mind the profession you have made before me. After my death I shall rise again and come back to life on the third day.' Whereas Jesus had sometimes forewarned his disciples of these things in an obscure fashion, he now spoke plainly to them as they seemed able to bear it, having spoken so magnificently of their Lord. But their ears could not bear the mention of death,[29] although the hope for his resurrection ought to have comforted them. They loved Jesus with great affection, but a human kind of affection. For they had not yet received the heavenly Spirit who would perfect in them what was still imperfect.

Thus, when Peter heard such cruel talk of condemnation, suffering, and death, he plucked up his courage and led Jesus aside so as to give him a warning in private that would be in his interest. That is human wisdom for you, often planning to put itself ahead of the wisdom of God. He even dared to reproach the Lord as though he were not sensible, wanting to die when he might escape. And if he believed that Jesus would come back to life on the third day, he considered not dying at all[30] preferable to coming back to life after death. However, Peter's impropriety had its origin in his great love for Jesus,[31] yet he was openly and sharply rebuked by the Lord, so that we might learn to follow the divine will in everything and not to put our judgment before the decrees of God. For it is not up to man to take Jesus aside and reproach him and tell him not to do what he had decided to do. Rather we must beg him to consider us worthy of his touch, leading us wherever he will. To pull this evil up by its roots and remove it from everyone's heart, Jesus first turned from Peter to the disciples and looked at them, whom he knew to share Peter's opinion, although Peter had more self-confidence than the rest and had dared to speak his mind. And reproaching in turn his critic, Peter, he said: 'Why do you stand up against me, Satan?' (Satan means 'adversary' in Syriac.[32]) 'Why do you, my disciple, attempt to go before your teacher,[33] a man going before God? Rather take your place behind me. This task which I am carrying out is no human task. You are still harbouring human affections, you do not know God's plan. If you are to be my disciple you must emulate my death, not impede it. And it is not only you who must emulate it – though you more than anyone else – but all the rest who have been chosen, indeed, all who wish to profess themselves my disciples.'

When Jesus had spoken thus, he commanded the whole multitude to be present with his disciples, lest someone think his speech concerned only those chosen men. When all were gathered in one place, Jesus spoke in a loud voice: 'Many follow me with their feet rather than by imitation of life. Nor have all come here for the same reason. Some are attracted by the novelty of miracles, others by a desire to be healed, others again by a thirst for

knowledge. But the man who wants to be my true follower, the true companion of my happiness and glory, must prepare in his mind to be a companion in suffering and death. Let him deny his own person, let him neglect his interest in this world, let him leave everything behind, let him even show contempt for his life. Let each man take up his cross and follow me. A disciple should not be ashamed to follow his teacher or a servant his master. And let no one wish to achieve glory in a manner different from the one he sees me adopt. Anyone who relies on himself for salvation will perish; anyone who has no faith in his own strength and relies on me alone will be saved.[34] For it is not enough to neglect your fields, your homes, your parents, your wife, and your children for my sake, you must neglect even your life: for to save their lives mortals abandon everything. Be of good cheer, you will not lose what you have spent on me. You will save it from ruin and would truly lose it by keeping it to your detriment. Through evangelical faith eternal life is conferred on all. Hence the man who has more regard for this life than for evangelical grace will in all truth lose it even if he appears to save it for the time being. For no one here can prolong his life beyond the appointed day. Indeed, no one truly lives who does not live well. And after this life, which is brief for all, he is given over to eternal death. But whoever exposes his life to the danger of death out of love for me and for the constant profession of the gospel will through me save his life, which would otherwise be truly lost. Nothing is so dear to man that he would not gladly endure its loss to redeem his bodily life, thinking in his heart "What does it avail me to have saved house and field, money, jewels, wife, and children, if I myself perish and can no longer enjoy what I possess? For even if all my possessions were safe, they are nevertheless lost to me upon my death." What can be so precious that it would not have to be despised by comparison with life?[35] If someone offered a man the wealth of Midas and Croesus,[36] the beauty of Absalom,[37] absolute power over the whole world, all manner of pleasure, and said: "Take this and die" – would the other not immediately reject the offer made on this condition and say: "Life by itself is more precious than all those things"?

'Since,' I say, 'every man gives prudent consideration to these things whenever his physical life is in danger, why do we not calculate even more carefully whenever that inestimable life is concerned? In this case your soul is offered eternal life. Will you not exchange the brief and wretched life of the body for this – especially since each man will receive his own body, now restored to a more blest life? Not everyone will have to die professing the gospel, yet everyone should be prepared in his heart to die so that, should circumstances require it, he holds his corporeal life cheap and saves his spiritual life. Whenever the storm of persecution breaks loose, we must

take up our cross; though even in peaceful times no one will be without his cross, for it is not easy to renounce one's natural emotions and the pleasures and enticements of this world, to castrate one's flesh, to refrain from excess, to suppress desire, to harness anger, and to dismiss feelings of revenge. For this is what everyone must do in peaceful times who wishes to be my disciple.[38] As for the rest, the world will rise and use every war engine against those who proclaim my name. It will threaten them with disgrace and exile, imprisonment, torture, proscription, and death. For this nation is evil and will always have more bad than good men, and among them it will be considered the worst crime to profess my name. In these circumstances, if someone is ashamed to profess himself my disciple in this wicked and adulterous nation, even though eternal bliss follows on a brief period of affliction, the Son of man will repay him in kind and in turn blush to call him his disciple when he comes a second time, not humble and despised as he is now, but marvellous in the glory of the Father, not accompanied by a few and lowly disciples, but surrounded by the countless host of the holy angels.'

Chapter 9

'Those who are unwilling now to bear the ignominy of my cross, will not be my companions in glory then.' The Jewish people expected some marvellous kingdom of the Israelites and thought it would arise in the near future, as soon as the Messiah had come. And therefore they could not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, for he had come in the person of such a humble and low man, but they were even more scandalized by the mention of cross and death. They did not understand the twofold coming of the Messiah, the first one, according to the world, humble and ignominious, the second one full of majesty and glory, which is to happen when the world comes to an end, so that his whole body might be joined to him, delivered from all evil, in the glory of the Father, and that he might plunge Satan with all his members into hell. But he wished the day of this coming to remain uncertain for all, yet he wished all to be prepared for it. Thus since there were in the crowd some who thought in their hearts 'When will that promised time of glory come?' and others who perhaps thought that it would never come, Jesus gave confidence to those who had doubts, saying: 'Do not doubt my words. The Son of man whom you see humble now and whom you will soon see as the most abject of men will appear in the majesty of his Father with all the angels and his chosen disciples. Nor is this time very far off. There are men here who in their lifetime will see the coming of God's kingdom in its power. Therefore let each man prepare himself that he may be found worthy of the heavenly kingdom.' The apostles did not under-

stand the Lord's words at the time because their meaning was not unequivocal. For only after his death, resurrection, and ascension, only after the Holy Spirit had been sent from heaven, was it that the power of that mustard seed unfolded, that is, the power of the evangelical teaching.

To keep the disciples from doubting that he would make good in the future his promise about the majesty of the second coming, Jesus wished to reveal to them even before his death a taste of his future majesty,[1] as far as human nature can comprehend it. Thus after six days Jesus took with him three of the chosen twelve, to indicate that those to whom he was to entrust this vision were the most distinguished[2] and were to keep silent until the time of speaking out had come. These were Peter, James, and John. These only he led to a very high mountain. For those whom Jesus considers worthy of this vision must be far above[3] caring for lowly things. Even today Jesus considers some chosen men worthy of being carried off to the mountain of pure contemplation, of being given a taste of eternal bliss through secret inspiration. The people living in the plain do not understand this, and if someone tells them of it, they do not believe it.

When they came to the mountaintop, they first spent time in prayer. For this most of all prepared the eyes of the spirit for such a vision. And behold, as they were praying, Jesus' appearance was suddenly changed. For his face, which before had seemed nothing out of the ordinary, had the splendour of the sun. His garments, too, shone with a whiteness more dazzling than snow, a whiteness no fuller can give to fabrics by applying his art. And they saw not only Jesus in this manner, but also Elijah and Moses in conversation with Jesus. It was Moses' distinction to have spoken to God, and Elijah is said to have been carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire.[4] Their conversation with Jesus manifestly signifies the consensus between the law and the prophets.[5] For the law had outlined Christ in mystical figures, the prophets had predicted in their prophesies that Christ would come in the form in which he did, yet the Jews refused to believe it. The conversation was about the glorious death he was shortly to suffer on the cross in Jerusalem, so that in this case, too, the mention of death would temper the intensity of the pleasure, of which no human mind was capable.

Peter, carried away by this ineffable vision and no longer in control of himself, interrupted the conversation they had begun about Jesus' death, and said: 'My teacher, let Jerusalem be, it is good for us to be here. Let us forthwith build here three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and a third one for Elijah.'

Peter's words had their source partly in a deep-seated horror of death,[6] partly in the pleasure of the vision, which had inebriated him, so to speak. For he spoke like a man who was beside himself and did not know what he

was saying. Such great fear had stunned the minds of mortals not yet capable of perceiving divine majesty.

Thus, lest the apostles be overcome by the greatness of this splendour, a cloud rose up and enveloped them, shielding them from the intolerable brightness. Here a taste of the majesty was given to corporeal eyes, and a little also to the ears. For the voice of the Father himself, full of majesty, rose from the cloud, saying: 'This is my most beloved Son. Hear him.' What boldness is it for the Jews still to argue against Christ when Moses and Elijah, whom they consider great authorities, bore witness to Christ, when the voice of the Father, whose devout worshippers they wish to appear, gave his whole authority to his only Son. Glory pleased them, but whoever wants to obtain it, must hear Jesus calling him to the imitation of the cross: Peter, do not hereafter reproach your Lord and put yourself ahead of the heavenly plan. You have heard the Father's voice: 'Hear him who is my only beloved Son. So far you have heard Moses and the prophets prophesying about Christ – they have done their duty. The one whom they have promised is now present, and thereafter you must not listen to those promising future things but hear him who is present and speaking through me: no one will speak with more certainty. Reject whatever disagrees with his words.'

After the Father's voice had been heard, the scene suddenly changed, and a different vision returned. For when they looked around as if awakened from sleep, they saw nothing of the things that they had seen before, only Jesus, who was once more among his disciples in his usual appearance. He had shown them his greatness only through a cloud, and they could not comprehend it. What would they have done if he had opened up to them his true, sublime glory?

Jesus therefore once again lowered himself to the humble state of his people and, leaving the mountaintop, descended to the rest of the disciples and to the multitude. Remember, then, teacher of the gospel, how much more it becomes you to lower yourself[7] to the level of the weak when you, too, have once been weak. For if you have anything sublime, it is Christ's doing, not yours. As they were descending from the mountain and before they came to the gathering of men, the Lord Jesus forbade the three disciples to tell anyone what they had seen until the time when the Son of man had risen from the dead. Others who had been told to keep silence broadcast their story all the more eagerly, but the three who had heard the voice of the Father – 'Hear him' – obeyed and kept silent about what they had seen, and kept such complete silence that they gave no hint of it even to the rest of the apostles before the appointed time. They did not comprehend, but they believed that Jesus had grave reasons for not wishing this to be divulged

before his resurrection was known. For what good would they have done by telling it? They would only have become a laughing-stock in the eyes of non-believers. And who would have believed that Jesus really appeared in this form when they would soon see him much reviled and, in the end, dying on the cross?[8] In the meantime the disciples no longer dared to question Jesus' words, having heard the Father's voice, although they could not understand the meaning of the words 'when the Son of man will rise from the dead.' They discussed it among themselves, thinking that the glory of his kingdom would come soon after his resurrection – glory of which they now had had a taste.

But their thoughts met with some doubt, because Jesus' death, about which he had often warned them, was now imminent, and he had promised that on the third day after his death he would return to life. Yet they had learnt from the prophecy of Malachi that Elijah would come before the great day of the Lord.[9] When they themselves could not explain these difficulties, they asked Jesus: 'Lord,' they said, 'you have fulfilled your promise. We have seen the glory of God's kingdom. Therefore, when you have returned to life, we hope that you will come as you appeared to us. But why is it that the Pharisees are saying that, according to Malachi's prophecy, that day would not come before Elijah the Tishbite had come and prepared the people for the advent of that day, lest the Lord smite all with a curse? Yet Elijah, whom we saw with you on the mountain, has not yet come, and nothing has as yet been effected through him. Therefore either the kingdom of God will not come immediately after your resurrection or the meaning of the prophecy is different from that handed down by the Pharisees.'

The Lord Jesus gave an ambiguous reply to the question of his disciples, for they were as yet not capable of understanding the whole mystery. For they shrank from the things that were of greater concern to themselves and dreamt only of the glory of the kingdom, of which they had had a taste. They did not understand that this too was the kingdom of God: that once the gospel had been propagated, the heavenly Spirit would subjugate the power of this world and of Satan. This had now begun to happen as lame men walked, blind men saw, dumb men spoke, lepers were made clean, and demons were cast out. Furthermore, the Lord did not wish his disciples to know when the kingdom, a taste of which they had now had, would come. Yet, that they might bear with greater moderation the death of their Lord, whom they loved beyond measure, he allowed them to dream for a time that the splendour of the kingdom, of which he had given them a token on the mountain, would come soon. Thus he tempered his reply to confirm the prophecy. He did not completely reject the Pharisees' interpretation, but only the impious arguments of those who concluded that the

kingdom of God had not yet come because Elijah, who had been promised by Malachi, had not yet appeared in the world. For the spiritual kingdom of God had now begun to draw near, and this the proud Pharisees did not understand. For according to the mystical sense, Elijah had now come.

Therefore Jesus said: 'And what Malachi said of Elijah, and what is predicted by the prophets regarding the Son of man, will no doubt happen. You read of Elijah that he will come before the great and terrible day of the Lord and will turn the hearts of fathers towards their sons and the hearts of sons towards their fathers, so that the children might understand that what their fathers had been expecting had now come to pass. Here, then, Elijah, going before, restores everything and sets right what is wrong, lest the Lord come to the great detriment of all if he find them unprepared. But just as the prophecy of Malachi regarding the precursor Elijah is true, so is the prophecy of the others saying that the Son of man will suffer much before he reveals his majesty and will be held in contempt, and be mocked, and in the end brought to death. Indeed, what was predicted about the coming of Elijah has now come to pass. What is unknown to the Pharisees I am disclosing to you, my dear friends. For Elijah has already come to announce that the kingdom of God is here and has called us to repent of our former lives. Yet those who pride themselves on their knowledge of the prophecies did not recognize him. They dealt with him, not as he deserved, but as they pleased, for they loved their kingdom more than the kingdom of God. For he came according to the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi,[10] calling in the wilderness that the great and terrible day of the Lord was near: "The axe is poised at the tree's root" [Matt 3:10]; let each man hasten to escape the imminent revenge of God. But they disdained and killed him who reproached all sins without respect of person. Nor will they treat the Messiah more gently than they have treated his precursor.' By these words Jesus indicated that John was Elijah,[11] not in body, but because of a spiritual affinity. He spared neither Pharisees nor kings and was thrown into prison and beheaded. What they did to the precursor they will do to the Lord. And the same they will do to his followers, the apostles. For whoever openly preached that the kingdom of God would come suffered much from the impious, and whoever preaches openly that it has already come must suffer a similar fate.

With words of this kind Jesus called them away from their dream of glory to the future storm which was now brewing, that is, he called them from pleasure to necessity. In the mean time they had come within sight of the people. For a huge multitude had gathered around the disciples whom he had left on the plain. And he also saw scribes discussing something with his disciples. When the people saw Jesus' unexpected return, after he had

withdrawn with a few men, they were all amazed, hastened towards him, and greeted him. Jesus was not unaware of what the Pharisees were discussing, yet he asked them the subject of their inquiry, that all might find out what it was about. For when the disciples out of embarrassment concealed the fact that they had tried in vain to cast out a demon, the scribes in turn kept silent after having falsely alleged that the name of Jesus was inefficacious in the disciples. Then one of the crowd – the man who had been the cause of the dispute – explained to Jesus how the matter stood: 'Master,' he said, 'I brought my son to you here. He is subject to a dumb spirit by whom he is pitifully tormented. Whenever he seizes him, he casts him down on the ground, and the boy foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, screams, and all the while he pines away and is consumed with this torture. Since you were not present, I asked your disciples to free my son and cast out the spirit. They tried, but were unable to do so.' When the Lord heard this, he wished to show that weak faith was the reason why the young man was not liberated,[12] and so he said under his breath, as if in anger: 'O nation of unbelievers, so many miracles have been worked, yet you cannot be induced to believe? Shall I struggle with your stubborn unbelief as long as I live? How much longer shall I bear with you? When will you progress to spiritual things? When will you believe the things you do not see, when so far you do not believe what you see with your bodily eyes? Bring him to me.'

And they brought him to Jesus. Tenacious is the evil to which the sinner is accustomed from tender years. But when he was led to Jesus, he was even more vexed. A struggle had begun between his spirit, wishing to repent, and his desire, recalling him to his old ways. Soon, when the demon saw Jesus, he sensed the inimical power and seized and vexed the man. He fell to the ground and writhed, foaming at the mouth. The people all thought this a pitiful sight – but it is a more pitiful experience when the sinner suffers in his soul as well, being subject to great and inveterate evils. But no evil is incurable for Jesus.

So that the others, too, might recognize the magnitude of the evil, the Lord asked the father how long ago the son had begun to be subject to this evil.[13] The father replied: 'From childhood on. And the demon tortures him not only in this manner,' he said, 'but often drives him headlong into fire and water so as to kill him.' You can hear that the evil was fierce and had turned into second nature, and therefore the father feared that it was incurable. For he added: 'But if it is in your power, help us, have mercy on us.' He did well to implore the mercy of Jesus, for he cannot be obliged by meritorious deeds. But you hear the voice of wavering faith when he says: 'If it is in your power.'[14] Jesus reproached him, saying: 'Do not doubt my power. For if you are able to believe, there is nothing your belief cannot obtain.'

On hearing this, the father conceived a more certain hope, and attesting to his keen desire with a loud voice and tears, he said: 'I have faith, O Lord, and if anything is lacking in my faith, come to my aid in my weakness.' In the mean time a great many people had run up from all sides to see the spectacle.

When Jesus saw them present – for he wanted them to witness the miracle – he spoke with that almighty voice with which, if he so wishes, he can recall dead men to life. He threatened the impure spirit if he did not leave at once, saying: 'Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you to leave this man and never again to enter him.' Jesus was as indignant with the spirit as he was merciful towards the man: thus he gave us an example of how to act when healing sinners.[15] You must pursue their vice in such a manner that you are seen to take an interest in the victim's salvation but with the realization that human effort is nothing without Christ secretly lending his voice. The disciples had commanded the spirit to leave, but in vain, for Jesus was absent. He is absent whenever faith – by which he wishes us to bring about all things – is cold or wavering.

And what happened in response to the imperious voice of Jesus? The spirit at once left, but that we might realize that he left unwillingly, he cried out and greatly vexed the wretched man. For as he was lying on the ground he seemed inanimate, so that many said he was dead. You can discern the image of the penitent man coming to his senses after having become inured to great vices. His hatred of sin has freed him from sin, but he who recognizes his shameful state and thinks of God's justice is very close to despair. Yet he is dead in a happy sense who is dead to his sins.[16] For what is left but to begin a life of justice?

Jesus, moreover, added a favour, without which there can be no salvation: He took the hand of the man lying on the ground, lifting him up as he lay unconscious, and immediately he who had seemed dead recovered his strength, rose up strong and gladdened by Christ's favour. If Jesus had not added the gift of a pious life, the man would have been freed of the demon by the faith of his father in vain. The deaf man hears who before had his ears blocked by earthly desires, keeping him from hearing the gospel message. The mute man speaks who before had a tongue tied by carnal affections. He is at rest and quiet who before was moved by tides of desire, ambition, wrath, envy, and avarice in turn and carried away as if by the impulse of an impure and violent demon.

The apostles looked on silently as everything was done, not daring to interrupt the Lord. The scribes, too, were silent, made wiser by the facts themselves, namely that the healing of the man had not been held up by the inefficacy of Jesus' name, but by the weakness of faith and belief. For what

had happened to the young man physically was happening to the Pharisees spiritually. They were not healed because they did not believe his words, which alone can heal. As for the rest, when Jesus had entered a house, his disciples asked him – when there were no witnesses – why they themselves had been unable to cast out this demon when previously they had cast out many in the name of Jesus. For a certain human concern had taken hold of their minds, lest they had inadvertently offended the Lord and lost the power that had once been given to them of working miracles.[17]

But Jesus, who is not in the habit of snatching away what he has once given but rather of increasing his gift, nevertheless was unwilling that his gifts be held in a careless and idle manner. He had shown abundantly through the example of the father of the cured man that weakness of faith had been an obstacle to driving out the demon. In the apostles faith was not yet as great as it ought to have been. And he answered that this was a special kind of demon that could not be expelled except by prayer and fasting. For these are the two weapons that are most efficient against impious demons. By prayer the strength of faith is renewed and quickened, as happened to the father when he said: 'Lord, come to my aid in my unbelief.' By fasting, which includes abstinence from all carnal desires,[18] the rebellion of the flesh is put down. In addition he who attempts to free others from unclean spirits must himself possess a pure spirit. And Jesus and his three companions had just returned from praying. The other disciples, who kept company with the multitude, did not pray or fast and therefore had no power to cast out a spirit that was so pertinacious and of such long standing. The greater our self-confidence grows, the more our power of working miracles decreases. The more the power of the flesh is subdued in us, the stronger the power of the Spirit grows – and it is the Spirit through which unclean demons are cast out. Therefore we must pray frequently, so that the strength of our faith may increase within us; and we must also mortify the flesh continually, so that the Spirit of Jesus Christ may live within us. Finally, he was at that time preparing the apostles for the hour in which they would be told to keep watch and pray so as not to fall into temptation.[19] But because they were drowsy after supper, their weak flesh was victorious.

After these things had been done, Jesus set out for Judaea together with his disciples. He passed through Galilee as if taking a random route.[20] Not that he feared death – he greatly longed for it – but so that he would not seem to provoke the priests and Pharisees to murder before the time had come. He took this appearance of fear upon himself to take all fear from his disciples and to express in himself the weakness of the nature he had assumed.

On the way he once again taught his disciples what they had by now

heard more than once. For he said: 'Indeed, what I have told you so often will come to pass: the Son of man will be given over into the hands of men to be taken prisoner, condemned, mocked, scourged, and finally slain. The mind must be prepared for what is no doubt near at hand. And it cannot be prepared unless it is free of all human affections, made strong by the power of the Spirit. I know that mention of death troubles you. But you must be stout-hearted. I shall not leave you for long. For on the third day I shall come to life again.' But the torpor that had taken hold of the disciples' minds was so deep that they could not understand his words even though they were very plainly spoken; they thought that there was some underlying mystery in them,[21] for they were mindful of the fact that they had on occasion before been deceived by his figurative speech, for example, when he told them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.[22]

They could not as yet conceive in their minds the mystery of the cross, nor could they conjecture the purpose of his death when he would soon come to life again, since whoever can come to life at will can also avoid death at will. Moreover, although they were greatly troubled by his speech, they nevertheless did not dare to ask Jesus, deterred by the example of Peter, who had not fared well when he interrupted the Lord in this manner. For he was told: 'Get behind me, Satan' [Mark 8:33]. They still knew only human wisdom.[23] For it was God's plan to be reconciled with mankind through the sacrifice of the 'immaculate sacrificial lamb' [1 Pet 1:19], and to forgive all men's sins on account of their faith. But the disciples kept dreaming of some worldly kingdom. Therefore on the way a dispute arose among them concerning who would hold first place in the kingdom of God, which they expected would come soon. A little while ago, during the ascent of the mountain, they had seen three disciples preferred to the rest.[24] They had seen Peter preferred to all[25] when the key of the kingdom of heaven[26] was entrusted to him. Yet there were some older than he, and even the Lord's kin.

When they came to Capernaum, the Lord asked them in private about the subject of their secret discussions during the journey. They fell silent out of embarrassment since they easily surmised that the Lord, the teacher of all modesty, would disapprove of their ambition. To tear this emotion – by far the most fatal one – from their hearts, Jesus sat down as one who would teach them a matter of great importance with all authority and asked for the twelve apostles to be present. 'Anyone who wishes to be first in the kingdom of heaven,' he said, 'will be the last of all and the servant of all; far be it from you to estimate the kingdom of heaven by the conventions of the kingdoms of this world.'

Soon afterwards, to implant this doctrine more deeply in the hearts of

his disciples, he called to a small boy and had him stand in their midst. And embracing him to show how averse he was from pride and how he loved those who are humble and meek in spirit, he said: 'Do you see this little one? What is more lowly and humble by the estimate of this world? But men who are like this child in humility, simplicity, and innocence are held in the highest regard by me. For it is fair that those should be dearest to me who are most like me. In this case, dignity is not measured by means, money, power, pride, and manifestations of strength. For such men, being most like pagan kings, are correspondingly most appreciated by pagans. As kings consider themselves honoured or injured vicariously in their nobles,[27] I, too, in the kingdom of the gospel consider myself honoured or offended vicariously in little ones like this boy whom the world disdains because of their innocence, simplicity, and humility. If you know anyone humbler than I, consider him a man of distinction in the kingdom of heaven. If you can find no humbler man, consider me the prince. And the closer a man comes to me in his contempt of things that are sought by nobles in princely courts, the higher you must think his rank. Anyone, therefore, who receives one of these little ones in my name, receives me; for I take pleasure in being received in them, loving them because they are like me. Furthermore, whoever has received me, the lowliest of all men by the measure of this world, has received not me, but him who sent me. For just as the teacher is honoured or dishonoured vicariously in his pupils, so the Father is honoured or dishonoured in the Son.' And in so speaking Jesus did not take away the authority of those who are in charge of the Lord's flock, he merely took away all ambition. For the humble state of little ones like the boy is measured not only by their physical strength but also by their spiritual humility, which does not lay claim to great things in this world and has no confidence in its own strength, but relies on Christ[28] with simple faith.

On account of this speech another difficulty arose in the minds of the apostles, which John expressed in these words: 'Master, when you sent us to preach the kingdom of God, we saw someone cast out demons in your name although he was not one of the twelve, nor one of the seventy whom you designated and sent out afterwards[29] – in fact, he did not at all belong to the disciples who follow us. We prevented him from acting in this manner since he did not belong to your company – but we are in doubt now whether or not we did right.' Jesus answered: 'Do not hinder anyone who helps the dissemination of the gospel in any way. For we must not be fastidious in receiving men who are eager to advance the cause of the gospel, by whatever effort. We must not consider whether they are followers of ours, but whether they are preaching my name. If he invokes my name and thus casts out demons, he is not likely to speak ill of me. For if he does, the very fact will

show him up. For he will be told: 'How dare you slander a name that you have found powerful and efficacious in working miracles?' Do not readily suspect that a man who effects a pious deed acts in bad faith. The man who does not go against the gospel aids it by the very fact that he does not aid the other side. Whosoever does not go against you is for you. A new doctrine must be advanced at every opportunity; how sincerely this is done is none of your business, only how advantageous it is to the business in hand.

'Not only will they who have cast out demons in my name reap the benefit of having advanced the business of the gospel, but so will those who, according to their ability, contributed ever so slightly to its progress. Whosoever gives you a drink of cool water in my name – that is, because you are my disciples and advance my cause – will not lack a reward, of this you may be sure. If anyone opposes the men through whom the business of the gospel is advanced – know that it is not advanced by those whom the world considers great men, but through weak, simple, and humble men – if anyone offends one of those weak ones who have placed their faith in me, he will not escape punishment; in fact, if such men were tied to a millstone and cast into the sea they would receive a lighter penalty. The rulers of this world inflict cruel punishment on those who impede the execution of orders given to their envoys; they nail them to the cross and sometimes quarter them or toss them from a cliff or drown them in the sea with a rock tied to them so that they cannot come up again. This is how unwilling great nobles are to see their men wronged – men whom they use as props of their tyranny, that is, the oppression of the people. More severely will God punish those who keep his children, through whom he wished the business of the heavenly kingdom carried out for the salvation of all men, from executing their king's command. Although they may appear to be acting with impunity for the time being, they will not escape the punishment of hell. The tyrants of this world could invent no manner of death comparable to the punishment inflicted on body and soul through which they will die a death of eternal torment, yet will not be allowed to die. Hence do not think of revenge when you go about your business. God will punish those who are against you.

'And if some small offence is given, not by your persecutors, but by those who appear friendly, consider nothing so important that for its sake your evangelical duties should be abandoned. Think of it as your right hand, that is, think of it as your father or a much needed friend. Think of it as your right eye, that is, your beloved wife and sweet children. Think of it as your foot, that is, your servant and helper whose services you cannot do without in the business of this life.[30] Cut off the hand, pluck out the eye, tear out the foot that keeps you from your evangelical duty. If you can bring your father and mother, your brothers and sisters with you to the salvation

of the gospel, do so. If love of them calls you away from the gospel, it will come to pass that you will die with them while they are unwilling to be saved through you. Throw out your natural affection, let love for the gospel overcome human love and obligations, and in spiritual danger do what you would do when in physical danger. If you were in a quandary and you had either to die or to lose your hand in order to save your life, you would not hesitate to cut off your hand and redeem your life with the loss of one limb, however necessary. Although it would be more desirable to be saved through the gospel together with your parents and friends, if this cannot be, it is better to forsake your parents – who not only refuse to be saved but even attempt to drag you down to ruin – and enter into life maimed, than together with your parents and friends to be thrown into hell, that is, into the unquenchable fire. There the worm of regret,[31] gnawing away on the conscience of wretched men, never dies. For they live only for their punishment. There the fire, by which they are tortured, is never extinguished. Both you and your parents will feel regret, but too late and in vain, you because you have followed your love for your parents to your own ruin, they because they have not followed you when you invited them to their salvation. Their calamity will not comfort you, nor will your torment lessen their punishment. Furthermore, those who rally to the cause of the gospel will not be blamed for the ruin of their parents who were unwilling to be saved. In this sense, cut off even your foot, thinking it better to come to the eternal life lame and crippled than to be thrown into hell with your feet intact, for there the fire can never be quenched and the worm never dies. Nothing is dearer to a man than his eyes, nothing sweeter than his wife, nothing more lovable than his children. But if you are brought to this strait – that you must either desert the gospel for their sake and perish with them or abandon those who are dearest to you in terms of human love – do not hesitate to pluck out your eye and throw it away, thinking that it is better to come with one eye[32] to the heavenly kingdom, where there is eternal life, than to be thrown into hell with both your eyes whole. Let neither your wife's tears nor your children's blandishments move you in this matter. It is foolish that they should cry about being abandoned when they could have followed you had they wanted to. All human affections must be considered of secondary importance when you are under the constraint of God's commands. All loss of material things must be judged a gain when eternal life is at stake.

'The profession of my name is not for faint hearts. On all sides men will arise to draw you away from your resolution; there will be persecutions and worldly affections, but those who undertake the business of the gospel must be above all this. The man who wishes to be an able administrator of the

evangelical doctrine must devote and dedicate himself completely to the divine will lest, corrupted by either fear of persecution or the enticement of carnal affections, he turn from the purity of the gospel truth. Just as according to Moses' law no victim is lawful unless it is seasoned with fire or salt,[33] or both, so anyone who wants to profess the philosophy of the gospel must be purified with fire from all human affections and seasoned with salt lest he be corrupted by contagion of evil. The wisdom of this world is weak and tasteless. It does not save a man from the corruption of this world, nor can it save others. The teacher of the gospel must be himself without corruption and must take away the corruption of others. This does not derive from the wisdom of philosophers, nor from the doctrine of the Pharisees, but only from the philosophy of the gospel, which eliminates and does away with whatever is liable to corruption in a man, applying the lime of truth. This is also the effect of that fire of the divine Spirit that takes away from and purges the mind of all carnal affections and somehow transforms into God[34] whatever it seizes, so that those who before were concerned with earthly things now disdain them and are carried away to heavenly things. Whoever is seasoned with this salt cannot be turned from the purity of the gospel spirit by any enticement. Whoever is purged by this fire will disdain all harmful designs of his persecutor.

'Nothing is better than fire if used rightly, nothing more useful than salt. But when the fire grows cold and the salt loses its taste and evaporates, what is left to season the plain man? When those who profess the spirit of the gospel are intimidated by the threats of men and abandon their resolutions or out of fear flatter the folly of princes, which they ought to combat forcefully, what hope is left? If those who profess the salt of the gospel are not only unable to cure the corrupt affections of others by the lime of truth, but even themselves abandon hope for the heavenly kingdom for the sake of parents, friends, or earthly things; when they add to the power of hell and interpret the gospel doctrine, twisting it to suit human affection and desire (than which nothing can be more wicked) – what is left to season human folly when those, too, are corrupt who should have provided the seasoning and when that, too, is tainted which is the only thing left in this world to make it come to its senses? However, that you may overcome the cruel persecutions and disdain all human affections for the sake of the gospel, that you may be able to think of your salvation, you must each have in yourself the salt of the gospel and you must keep peace and friendship among yourselves. The salt will make you pure; concord will make you strong and powerful. Wherever there is dissent, the salt of the gospel is missing. Wherever there is the disease of ambition, there is neither peace nor salt. Thus the philosophers fight among themselves because they do not have that salt, and likewise the

Pharisees are in disagreement with the Sadducees and Herodians because they are corrupted by wicked affections and lack the salt of the gospel. Your teaching will season the folly of the world once men realize that in your affections there is nothing corrupt or rotten, either through desire for glory, love of money, desire for revenge, fear of death, zeal for life, or any human affection at all; and you will season the world if, as your life matches your teaching, you will agree among yourselves. And you will agree if you cast far from you all evil ambition, under which those labour who seek the kingdom of this world, and if you impart with all sincerity to others the heavenly doctrine that you have received from me.'

Chapter 10

When the Lord Jesus had prepared the minds of his disciples with such warnings against the imminent storm, he left Galilee and set out for that part of Judaea which is on the other side of the Jordan, where John first taught. For Jesus' fame had now become so great everywhere that he could not remain hidden anywhere. So it was that there, too, a crowd gathered in a short time as had been the case in other places, and Jesus never tired of doing good to all men, healing their bodies and instructing their minds.[1] And here, too, there was no lack of Pharisees, always acting in character. The multitude seeks health, seeks knowledge; the Pharisees prefer lying in wait to being healed, challenging to being taught.[2] And all the time they hid their wickedness behind the appearance of piety and concealed their dishonesty behind a desire to learn. O intractable wisdom! They approached Jesus bodily, but were far away from him spiritually. They confronted him with a problematic question, saying: 'What is your opinion, master? Is it right for a man to dismiss his wife?' They had devised this sophistical[3] question among themselves, hoping that in his reply he would run aground in one place or another. He had called blessed those who castrated themselves on account of the kingdom of God.[4] Thus if, being favourably disposed towards chastity, he had now pronounced that a man could divorce his wife in order to take another, as the Jews commonly did, he would seem to teach contradictory things.[5] If he had answered that it was not allowed, they would have confronted him with the authority of the law,[6] which his answer violated, for the law gave the husband the right of repudiation.

The Lord, however, wished to trap those clever men in their own cunning, for they had twisted the law into a noose for him. Thus he asked them: 'What need is there to ask me when you profess knowledge of the law? What commandments has Moses given you regarding these matters?'

They answered: 'Moses permits the husband, if anything in his wife

offends him, to divorce her after giving her a writ of divorce, and if he so pleases, he may take another wife.' This permission given by the law was interpreted by the Pharisees to mean that a man acted rightfully when he repudiated his wife for any reason, however frivolous, and brought another one into his house. They did not understand the lawgiver's intent, which they could have discovered by reading the beginning of Genesis.[7]

Jesus, therefore, said: 'When Moses gave you the right of repudiation, he did not at all approve of divorce but condoned the desire of husbands and preferred to make concessions to the lesser evil rather than opening up a door to worse things. He preferred an unfair divorce to murder,[8] poisoning, and parricide. For he knew your hard hearts and offered this remedy lest you go on to greater crimes. In paradise, however, before human nature lapsed into this wickedness, matrimony was not instituted that it might end in divorce on account of the husband's desire, but that there might be a lasting and inseparable union of husband and wife. For in the beginning God joined one man to one woman and wished such great love to exist between them that no separation could take place. For this reason he said: "A man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall be made one flesh" [Gen 2:24] in such a manner that they become joined both in body and spirit and are no longer two individuals but one person, with the result that they share between them all sadness and joy.

'These words plainly declare that divorce did not please God, or he would have rescinded what he had at first instituted. But Moses went beyond God's wish in permitting repudiation, making concessions for the time being to your hard hearts, considering adultery a lesser crime than parricide. If you approve of Moses' forbearing, be aware of the reason that obliged him to be forbearing. Let man not tear asunder what God himself in the beginning joined in marriage in such a manner as to make it indivisible. Rid your hearts of hardness and there will be no need and no place for divorce.' With such a measured reply Jesus confirmed God's commandment, yet neither condemned Moses, nor lowered the standing of chastity, nor laid himself open to the feint of the Pharisees – rather he caught those who had come to catch him.

As for the rest, after they had gone indoors and the apostles asked him privately about this matter, Jesus condemned divorce more openly: 'Whosoever has divorced his wife and married another,' he said, 'is committing adultery against her. And conversely, if a wife has left her husband and married another man, she is committing adultery against her first husband. For it does not become teachers of the gospel to be hard-hearted, to be unable to bear a wife's character and unwilling to correct her in a friendly spirit, but to conceive a hatred for her at the first opportunity and plot her death unless

she withdraws. This is a Judaic spirit, which must be foreign to my disciples. A Jew divorces his wife because of bad breath, runny eyes, or similar faults, when among the followers of the gospel there is only one reason that could sever a marriage, namely when the marital trust has been betrayed. For a wife who gives her body to another man has ceased to be a wife, even if she is not divorced. And a husband who gives his body to another woman has ceased to be a husband, even before divorce.[9] Just as a fire is no fire unless it is hot, so a marriage is no marriage unless two are made into one. One cannot make one flesh out of three or four partners.'

When he had spoken thus, some people brought in children that Jesus might lay his hands on them and bless them. They had seen that his touch took away disease and they believed that it would benefit the children too and protect them against the many future evils this tender age is usually subject to. The disciples, however, thought that the Lord had weightier matters on his mind and should not be bothered with such trifles, and thus kept the children from coming to Jesus, reproaching those who had brought them for troubling the Lord with their importunity. Yet just a little while ago the Lord had commended the little ones to them.[10] When he therefore saw that they had forgotten what he had told them and were preventing the children from coming to him, he restrained his disciples, saying: 'Let the children come to me and do not keep them from my touch, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. In them we have an example of the innocence and simplicity according to which a proud and wicked man must be forged anew if he wants to be admitted to the kingdom of heaven. Let no one think that they are contemptible because they are physically weak or simple. Verily I say to you: Unless a man is reborn and casts off all cleverness, avarice, ambition, hatred, wrath, vindictiveness, and spite, and is made like these young ones, he will not be received into the kingdom of heaven.' And to recommend their simple innocence all the more he embraced them one by one and laid his hands on every single one, blessing them, and teaching the bishops that they must not disdain common and unlearned men and those who are humble and mean in the eyes of the world, but that they must foster them in every way until they progress to a better state. And, above all, the Lord Jesus must be asked to be kind enough to lay hands on them and bless them. He will give to the little ones the wisdom by which they may avoid the snares of the devil, he will give tongues to infants, and from the mouths of infants and babes at their mother's breast the praise of God will be sung in perfection.[11]

These matters were carried on indoors. When the Lord went out into the street, a young man approached him – so that, after childhood had been commended, adolescence, too, might be called from a good beginning to

more perfect things. He fell down at Jesus' feet, saying: 'Good master, what am I to do to obtain eternal life?' His question was not quite free from the vice of self-love. But the kind teacher will overlook this fault, if it is not excessive, hoping for progress at that age. For the young man did not so much wish to be instructed by the Lord in what he ought to do as to be praised for what he had done. And he called him 'good' although he thought him no more than a man[12] – as if a man could have anything good on his own account.

As if offended by this proud epithet, Jesus said: 'Why do you call me good? This name is too grand for a man, for no one is truly good except God alone. Just as a man who claims this title for himself is arrogant, so a man who attributes this quality to another one attributes to him more than is his due.'[13] With these preliminary words Jesus checked the young man's haughty spirit, for he thought that he himself did not fall much short of this honourable name. Then Jesus added: 'Do you know the commandments?' And when he asked: 'What commandments?' Jesus said: 'Those common commandments, on account of whose observance the Jews claim the titles of goodness and justice: do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not cheat your neighbour, honour your father and mother.'

At that the young man hoped for great praise and said to Jesus with joy and alacrity: 'Master, I have observed all of these from childhood on.' Jesus, having looked upon the young man, who was of good character and high promise and who, unlike the Pharisees, did not pretend these things or feel pleased with himself in a sinful manner, indicated that he took pleasure in the zeal of his youth. He showed his pleasure in the young man's pious attitude, even though it was imperfect, because it contained the promise of an evangelical character – zeal for piety is praiseworthy in youth, since it is rare. And in this manner he advised us not to alienate young and tender hearts or overwhelm them with savage reproaches whenever we see some natural inclination towards, or promise of, evangelical piety – like some teachers who are excessively surly and by their severity teach naturally talented boys to hate learning.[14] Rather, let us lead them on to better things by our kindness, approving their zeal, yet showing from time to time the areas in which there is room for improvement. Thus Jesus tempered the premature joy of the young man, saying: 'I commend you for having observed these laws. But perfect justice does not lie in them, as you think. You are still lacking one thing.' When the young man was surprised and asked what that was, the Lord answered: 'Go home and sell all your possessions, and when you have collected all the money, give it to the poor. You will not lose what you give away in this manner; rather, instead of earthly possessions you will store up a treasure in heaven. Then come, free

and unencumbered, and follow me. For then I shall recognize in you a disciple of the gospel.' The young man had many failings: but touching on this sore, Jesus wished to show how far he still was from evangelical perfection.

When the young man had heard this he went away saddened, for he had been disappointed in his hope to be praised for his justice. For he had many possessions and considered it hard to abandon them all at once. But he left in a manner that conveyed hope. For he was not angry, he did not grumble, but went away silently and in sadness. He had been praised for his zeal in pursuing piety; he was sad because of his human weakness. But he did not understand Jesus' words. For he was not simply thinking of possessions that must be abandoned, but rather of affections. The man who is prepared to leave everything behind when the situation demands it has in fact left everything. By this example Jesus warned his disciples against the desire for wealth.

When the young man had departed sadly, Jesus looked around at his disciples, for the scene had been acted out for their benefit, and said: 'He has gone away. How difficult it is for those who have money to enter the kingdom of God!'

These words greatly astonished the disciples, who thought that hardly anyone could be found who would at once throw away great possessions for the sake of the kingdom of God, although they themselves had left some few possessions behind. Thereupon Jesus explained what he had said, mitigating the harshness of his speech with gentle words and interpreting the dark sayings that they had not understood. 'Dear children,' he said, 'how difficult it is for those who have many possessions and put their trust in them, as the common run of mortals do, to enter the kingdom of God. And lest these seem harsh words, let me add what is even harsher, yet very true: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'

When the disciples heard this, they were even more troubled in their hearts, reasoning thus among themselves: If no one can be saved unless he enters the kingdom of God, and if no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he throws away his wealth, and since we see all men so greatly attached to their wealth that they are not likely to leave it – who among the rich can be saved? This concern of the disciples was a reflection of the fatherly feelings of the Lord, for they wished as many men as possible to enter the kingdom of God,[15] but they did not yet understand the power of the evangelical profession, in which we are told[16] to disregard wife, children, parents, and even danger to our life, if matters so demand it. To disdain wealth is the easiest command if you consider the facts; and

again the most difficult of all if you consider the character of the common people.

When the Lord saw his disciples troubled and saddened by these words and close to despair, he gave them courage, but first he cast his eyes around, as he usually did when he was about to say something important. 'Why do you despair of the salvation of rich men?' he said. 'What I ask is hard, but even harder tasks must be performed. For nothing is more difficult than to disregard danger to one's life for the sake of the gospel. In this you will have me as your leader. If there are men to whom the gospel is dearer than life, do you despair of finding men to whom their wealth will be unimportant by comparison with the gospel? In terms of human feelings these demands seem impossible, but this business is conducted with divine help. God exacts difficult things that exceed human strength, but he also adds his help so that you may be able to fulfill his commands. So it comes to pass that things which man cannot do on his own he is able to do with the help of God,[17] to whom nothing is impossible. To the man who believes in him with his whole heart nothing is impossible in the name of God. Thus those who neglect their possessions on account of the kingdom of God will not suffer a loss but make a profit. To understand this is not a matter of human wisdom but of belief infused from heaven. For whoever believes with his whole heart that he will here obtain a hundredfold recompense and in the future will be given eternal life for abandoning possessions that keep him from the business of salvation will gladly and willingly accept this exchange.'

These words relieved the disciples of their despair and gave them more courage than was proper. For now Peter began to be somewhat pleased with himself, comparing himself with the young man who had gone away saddened. 'Behold,' he said, 'we have left everything for your sake and have followed you. We have done what you demanded from the young man. To him you promised a treasure in heaven – what reward, then, ought we to hope for?'[18]

If you consider the possessions of the apostles, they had not left behind much, especially Peter, who had been a fisherman and by his daily work barely provided a living;[19] but to each man his own possessions are dearest.[20] And he has left behind a great deal who has left all he had in such a spirit as to think neither of replacing nor increasing them.[21] He who truly casts out love of wealth leaves behind not the amount he possessed but the amount that he could have wished for.

By this rule did the Lord measure the things left behind by the apostles, who had abandoned willingly what was very dear to them, namely parents, wives, and relatives. He therefore answered in this manner: 'Verily I say to

you: not only will you not be cheated of your reward but there will be no one who has left behind his house, brothers or sisters, father or mother, children, or land for love of the gospel or for my sake who will not receive a hundredfold return for each thing he has left behind and will receive it even in this life, however savage the storms of persecution. For the benefits gained from evangelical love far outweigh the deprivation suffered in cruel persecutions. Instead of one brother or sister in the flesh whom he left behind he will have as many brothers and sisters as he will have companions in the profession of the gospel. And spiritual love is greater and sweeter than natural affinity. Instead of one father and mother he will have as many fathers as he will have teachers; instead of the one house he left behind, he will always have a home,[22] for wherever evangelical love is strong, it has all things in common. Instead of the few acres he has left behind he will become a joint owner of all the acres those who truly profess the gospel possess. And even if this were not the case, the loss of material things will be made up by spiritual gifts that you receive, worth a hundred times more than you have left behind. For there is no comparison between fleeting things that will soon perish even if no one takes them away, and the riches of the spirit, which no one can convey except God alone and no one can take away except he who gave them. And if this, too, appears too small a gain, there will be added to the trove the possession of eternal life in the world to come.' With these words Jesus fortified the spirits of his disciples, who were as yet weak, lest they should regret having left behind their possessions or relapse into love of material wealth and, in their zeal to become rich in mean things should incur wretched poverty as far as the possessions of the spirit are concerned. And this is an unhappy exchange: when someone leaves spiritual for material goods, he will descend from true to vain and deceptive riches, be turned from eternal goods to fleeting and mortal ones.

So as not to make his disciples smug because they had been praised by the Lord for having left behind material possessions and disregarded their affections, Jesus added concluding words of this kind: 'Yet many who now seem to stand first, will one day stand last; and those who now seem to stand last, will one day come first. Those must not be despaired of who cannot as yet perform what the vigour of the gospel demands, nor must those be confident who have already progressed to a certain stage. For there are men who have done the same as you and are destined to lapse into an even more wicked form of avarice. And there are men who are now unable to disdain wealth (like that young man) who will thereafter surpass the others and be seen to have left behind everything. Finally, men who appear immensely wealthy by the judgment of this world will be found the most abjectly poor, and those who gave the false appearance of disdaining all wordly wealth

will be found out as having been the most greedy. For this merit does not lie in circumstances but in attitudes.[23] The man who possesses without being possessive of what he has by chance obtained and who readily gives whenever his neighbour needs help, who does not jump for joy whenever he makes a gain or feel faint with grief whenever he suffers a loss is poorer than he who values highly the little he has and never ceases to add to it.' With these words Jesus appeared to point at Judas,[24] who had himself left everything to follow Jesus, yet thereafter was found to be more wickedly greedy than those who are wealthy by the estimate of this world.

With words of this kind Jesus gradually shaped and formed the minds of his disciples to withstand the gravest of all tempests which was now threatening and at the mention of which they completely recoiled. For he now prepared to go up to Jerusalem – a name the disciples hated, because they had heard that it was there that the Lord would suffer undeservedly.[25] To other places the apostles had sometimes preceded him, for example on the occasion when they were hungry and plucked corn.[26] On this journey they could not precede him. Indeed it is a difficult journey[27] to go up to Jerusalem. It needs strong and valiant men in whose hearts this world has no longer a place. Thus Jesus preceded and the disciples followed, sad and under protest because he willingly sought out danger to his life. And they were amazed at his courage and feared for themselves lest they themselves incur danger with, and through, him. Such disciples, dull and weak, Jesus tolerated, while we, who are weak ourselves, have no mind to suffer the slowness of weak men. All yearned for the kingdom, all wished to be his companions in glory and were fighting for first place. But from that which was of all things the most necessary, they recoiled with their whole hearts. Thus Jesus gives us a model for teaching our neighbour: we must give him what is necessary rather than what is pleasant, what is salutary rather than what is soothing. He called the twelve to him, for he wished them to be to some extent participants in this storm, not just witnesses, and he impressed on their minds what he had previously taught in a covert manner and recently predicted openly.

'Behold now comes the time about which I have already spoken to you often. We are going up to Jerusalem so that you may understand that I am suffering willingly and knowingly[28] what I shall suffer. For we must not flee when the time appointed by God has come. This sacrifice will be performed in Jerusalem – it is the place destined for the victim. And the Son of man will be given over into the hands of those who are first among the priests, scribes, Pharisees, and elders of the people. They will condemn him as being guilty and impious and, after accusing him of various crimes, will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the gentiles as a manifest criminal so

that he may be mocked by them and spat upon. Finally he will be scourged and slain, but he will rise from the dead on the third day. You must know and remember this for two reasons in particular: partly, lest you think that this is carried out by chance or without my knowledge and against my will, whereas everything is carried out according to God's plan; partly, lest the storm break loose and overtake you unaware and trouble you more than necessary.[29] For you must not take it so grievously that I shall undergo suffering willingly on your behalf and on the command of the Father, nor is it proper that you should be frightened out of your wits by an unexpected turn of things when I have warned you in advance so many times.'

Since the apostles turned a deaf ear to these words and did not dare to dissuade him, two of the disciples, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus privately. They had conceived good hope from his mention of resurrection, thinking that the kingdom which Christ had promised so many times would come soon. They had not quite cast from their hearts the feeling of ambition. For they had suborned their mother[30] to ask on their behalf for some special position of honour in that kingdom. But before uttering their wish, they attempted to put the Lord under obligation so that he could not rightly deny it.

Pretending that he would not deny anything they asked, he told them to say freely whatever great wish they had; for they were obviously about to ask for something great. 'Lord,' they said, 'we ask for this honour in your kingdom: let us be the ones to sit next to you, one on your right hand, the other on your left.'

Jesus revealed their ignorance by a question. For they were still dreaming of a material kingdom,[31] still thinking of first rank. Yet this was not the time to reproach them for their crass thinking. Rather he recalled to their minds the mention of death from which they recoiled: 'Because you do not understand the nature of God's kingdom you also do not know what you are asking for. You are asking for vain glory and you are not considering how to arrive at true glory in my kingdom. I shall reveal the way to you. And if it is acceptable to you, you may have good hopes of achieving that longed-for glory – true glory, that is, not the one you are dreaming of now. Are you able to drink from the cup from which I am now preparing to drink? Are you able to receive the baptism which I am about to receive?'

In their eagerness to obtain their wish they made promises for themselves as rash as their demand had been foolish, for they did not yet sufficiently know themselves: 'Yes, we are able,' they said.

In his kindness[32] the Lord did not rebuke the folly of his disciples, for the time had not yet come for them to comprehend such things. They still heard what they heard as in a dream, and nevertheless Jesus formed them

and taught them, adapting his speech to their weakness, so that in future, like men awakened, they might clearly perceive the truth through the Holy Spirit and love the Lord all the more because he had gently borne with such disciples in spite of his exalted nature and so that they who had now become more perfect might in turn emulate the Lord's kindness in tolerating the weakness of their neighbours whom they were teaching, mindful of how ignorant, how oblivious, how slow they too had once been. It had been the voice of ambition that made them say: 'Let us sit next to you in your kingdom.' It had been the voice of rashness that made them say: 'Yes, we can,' when they would soon deny the Lord out of fear. But an error that has its origin not in wickedness but in simplicity has to be either healed or endured for the time being. Thus Jesus replied: 'You will indeed drink from my cup and receive the baptism that I shall receive, but in the future. For you cannot yet do what you are so confident of doing: for this you must prepare your minds. As for your reward, leave all judgment to God the Father – let your only endeavour be to emulate me. He has a reward ready for each man and distributes it according to his judgment, as it seems good to him. For matters are not done in the heavenly kingdom as they are done in the courts of princes: there the man who holds first place is not always the one who deserves it but rather the one whom the king favours most – but sometimes he favours the worst man. As for the rest, my Father is no respecter of persons.[33] Nor is it up to you to determine the measure of your merits when you can do nothing on your own account or to determine how far you surpass others. Your task is simply to try to emulate me as far as God has given you the strength. You will not be cheated of your reward, even if you give no thought to it. For the man who competes for a prize and will not compete unless he is sure to be given the prize cheats himself of the prize.[34] Let no one be his own judge; let him do his best and defer all judgment to God.'

And behold, one evil gave rise to another. The simplicity of the two disciples revealed the even greater ignorance of the others. For when they found out what the two had sought from the Lord, even though they had not obtained it, the rest, as if envious, were angry with them for not sufficiently acknowledging their mediocrity[35] and for daring to ask for first place, which was more rightly deserved by others. There was no one who did not hold out hopes for himself, and each fancied his own gifts and merits. These are indeed the feelings of men who live in the courts of princes. Each is pleased with himself, each promises himself the foremost honours and envies others who are preferred, except that malice is mixed in with the ambition of courtiers – the ambition of the disciples was merely simplicity. They had been overcome by a profound oblivion of Jesus' words about the least and

the greatest man's role in the kingdom of heaven and about the imitation of the little ones.[36] And if one asks why the Lord permitted such great ignorance to reside in his disciples for such a long time, when he had decided to let them spread the gospel philosophy through the whole world, the answer is that he permitted it principally to uproot such feelings gradually but completely from the hearts of his followers, and therefore he let them lapse again and again into the same emotions. The same happens if a man is delivered of a fever all at once: he soon forgets about his illness and the benefit received from the physician; conversely if a man suffers frequent relapses and, in the end, is delivered of his illness with difficulty, he hates it all the more, has more appreciation for the benefit of having his health restored, and knows better how to cure others who are in the grip of the same illness.

Thus Jesus realized that the foolish petition of the two and the indignation of the others derived from the same source, and called them all together to give them all a dose of the same medicine. 'Whenever you hear about the kingdom of heaven being completely spiritual,' he said, 'and as different from the kingdom of the world as is earth from heaven, do not think of the shape of things as they appear to you in earthly kingdoms. For you know that those who are seen to rule over the heathen people of this world lord it over their subjects; and those who are chiefs among them exercise their authority over their underlings – beware lest the same happen to you. In this kingdom the desire to help, not ambition, aggrandizes you. And, as I have taught you before,[37] anyone among you who wishes to be truly great must be your servant. Let him not be eager for power, but let him lower himself to be of service to all. And whosoever wishes to be first among you, let him become the servant of all. Let him claim no honour for himself, but let him serve for the benefit of all, and from this derive no honour for himself, but ascribe all glory to God, whom he serves in his members. Do not tire of emulating what you see expressed in me. For the Son of man has not come into this world to rule and keep others in bondage, but to bring salvation to all; and not only to serve the interest of all, but to give of himself so that even slaves might obtain liberty, that by one man's loss many might be saved. Indeed, this is the rule of the gospel. Let him who will strive for it after my example. And let him expect a reward, not such as he sets out for himself, but such as the Father decreed to give him freely, just as I simply obey the commands of the Father right to the cross, leaving the decision about a reward to him. It would therefore be impudent to seek honours according to the example of earthly princes and to seek a reward from the heavenly Father. Either strive for the heavenly kingdom and hope for a heavenly reward or seek the kingdom of this world and refrain from asking a reward of the heavenly kingdom.'

With such warning words they were instructed before setting out with Christ for Jerusalem. For the freer a man is from all carnal affections the better prepared he is for the battle of the cross.

Now they had come to the town of Jericho, which is not far from Jerusalem. Jericho in Syriac means 'moon.'[38] It bears the type of this life, which is nothing but a constant alternation of birth and death, waning and growing, maturing and aging, sadness and joy. For our sake Jesus descended from that heavenly tranquillity. Nor did he tarry here but hastened on to Jerusalem, eager for the salvation of man. And the disciples followed him there, together with a numerous crowd of men. Behold how Jesus is always true to his name: he either teaches or heals or brings to life.[39] What his death would effect through faith in the gospel teaching he expressed in a corporeal image. Mankind was blind in their ignorance of the truth, beggarly in their lack of all virtue. If Jesus had not crossed our path, there would have been no hope for light.

A well-known blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the wayside. When he realized that Jesus was approaching, he began to shout and say: 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.' First an evangelical rumour announces to us the passing of Jesus. Soon we conceive faith in him, which does not allow us to let him go by without addressing him, but acknowledging his wretchedness, man cries out for mercy. He is closest to sight who recognizes his own great blindness. The cry 'Have mercy' is not the voice of the Pharisee, for he thinks himself keen-sighted. This is the voice of the gospel. Nor does the Pharisee say: 'son of David.' He says: 'Is this not the son of a carpenter?' The blind beggar saw better through his darkness than those Jews today who pride themselves on their knowledge of the law and thus proclaim themselves 'leaders of the blind' [Matt 15:14].

But the crowd obstructed the wretch crying out. For what other effect can the crowd have but to obstruct? His conscience cried out to Jesus, and not only with one voice, but with as many voices as the heart is conscious of sins. The law protests:[40] 'What business have you with Jesus when you are defiled with so many sins? You are crying in vain. God is just. Be prepared to receive the punishment for your evil deeds. The rulers of the synagogue forbid that anyone proclaim the name of Jesus or pronounce it. Salvation does not lie in Jesus but in Moses.' Philosophers and pagan princes, too, cry out against him. But so that you may recognize the true gospel faith in the blind man, mark that he did not yield to the crowd in his way. He did not yield even though he was reproached and told to keep silent. He shouted all the more loudly: 'Son of David, have mercy on me.'

The crowd took offence at the beggar's cry; Jesus alone was not

offended but stopped and commanded the blind man to be brought to him. Jesus had heard his cry as he was passing by, but he pretended that he had not. He did this not to be difficult but to elicit from the blind man faith as an example to others. Through the blind man Jesus wished to teach all how sight could be extorted from Jesus. First comes hope that Jesus will stop for our cries, and then that we will be brought to him by the teachers of the gospel or by secret inspiration.[41] For the blind man could not approach Jesus without the guidance of holy doctrine, which we must not disdain even if it is administered by men. Blessed is the voice of the apostles calling on the blind man – whenever they call him at the command of Jesus. But today they call us without the command of Jesus, and not to Jesus, but to the bulwarks of human philosophers, to the observance of Mosaic law, to the comforts of this life. Such men make blind men blinder. But the apostles obeyed the command of their Lord and called the man to Jesus. Far were they from reproaching him, as did the crowd; on the contrary, they added to his faith and good hope by saying: 'Be of good cheer. Rise, for Jesus calls you.'

From their words the blind man conceived such great hope that he cast away his coat, which protected him against the cold, jumped up, and ran to Jesus.

Here I shall detain you a little, good reader, to consider the readiness of this blind beggar. Whenever you are called to Jesus you fail to cast off your coat, fail to jump up and run to him who calls you. Instead, you shuffle, delay, hesitate, argue, lie torpid[42] in your filthy darkness, preferring to beg a pittance from the world, clothed in your filthy cloak, than to accept from Jesus the light which embraces all happiness. How splendid is the garment of innocence! How sordid is the cloak of the man covered with desire, avarice, excess, and ambition![43] What a wretched beggar is he who crouches low before the world for the sake of vile bodily comforts! What a wretched blind man is he who does not know himself or God! Whenever, reading or hearing the teaching of the gospel, you are called away from this wretched calamity to attend on Jesus, drawn by some secret inspiration, why do you not cast off everything that is keeping you from such great happiness and jump to the hope of a better life? Why do you not hasten to Jesus with the greatest faith, when he alone can dispense light and is willing to give it to all? Jesus has come to you, has summoned you – are you reluctant to hasten to him in turn? You pine away in your darkness till your dying day, and you will not always have Jesus going by. Certainly Jesus will not call you to salvation once you have died – he will call you to justice. Here he is walking by, hearing the cry 'Have mercy on me.' Here he stops, calls out, and dispenses light. This beggar has put your sloth to shame.

When he had come before Jesus, the Lord said to him: 'What is the

meaning of your cries? What do you want me to do with you?' What does this mean? Was Jesus unaware why the man had cried out? Did he not know what he himself was about to do? On the contrary – this play was acted out for us.[44] Many believed that the blind man was hoping for alms from the Lord, since after all he was a beggar; for in this fashion many cry out to Jesus even today: 'Lord have mercy.' And on being asked what they are after, what do they wish for in the end? One says: 'Make me rich.' Another: 'Let me obtain an office.' A third: 'Give me a wife with a dowry.' Yet another: 'Give me prowess.' Another: 'Give me long life.' And another: 'Let me be avenged on my enemy.' But these things Jesus often takes away from his beloved people because it is better for their salvation. The beggar in the gospel asked for nothing of this sort. He knew what he must seek from Jesus. Let us therefore listen to the blind man and emulate him. 'Rabboni (that is, my teacher), make me see.' Disregarding everything else, he wished nothing but vision to discern God and his Son, Jesus. To know him is to have eternal life.[45] To know is to see. O truly evangelical prayer! How few words in it and how much faith! Indeed this is the short prayer that reaches heaven.[46]

Jesus therefore answered: 'Go forth, your faith has brought you salvation.' The man who with his bodily eyes sees nothing is not immediately condemned. But he cannot reach salvation if he sees nothing with his mind's eyes. To have recovered those eyes means eternal salvation. Hear the man's voice, all you Pharisees who say: 'By frequent fasting, long prayer, almsgiving, and sacrifices I merit salvation.' This is not the spirit in which you cry out 'Have mercy'; rather you say: 'Give me the reward I have earned.' Jesus, on the other hand, grants salvation in return for faith, not works. And in the gospel the blind man recovered sight, not because he deserved it, but because he believed. And being commanded to go away, he followed Jesus instead. Gratuitously sight was given to him; gratuitously his blindness was taken away. Thereafter it is left to your discretion whether you will use God's gift well or badly. You are not compelled to follow Jesus, you are only granted to discern him. Go wherever you will, but at your own peril. But what did that blest blind man do? He did not return to his cloak, he did not return to his former begging, but oblivious to everything, he followed Jesus on his journey. It is not enough to know Jesus; you must also seek to emulate him whom you see. Jesus proceeds directly to the cross, and there you must follow him when you have recovered your sight. As long as you are blind you may cry out: 'Jesus have mercy on me.' Unless you recover your sight, you cannot follow Jesus on his journey. For who would follow a man who willingly surrenders his life to death unless he discerns by his faith that temporary ignominy is the way to eternal glory; corporeal torment is the way to eternal joy; death is the way to eternal life. The blind men of this

world cannot see this as they keep a keen look-out for power, wealth, honour, pleasure, and long life, even consulting astrologers, diviners, and magicians in their struggle to obtain these goals. Only they have sight who believe what the gospel teaches, who believe that they will receive what the gospel promises.

Chapter 11

What Jesus had effected figuratively in the blind man had not yet come to pass in the minds of his disciples. They could not yet perceive clearly how blessed death was for those who imitated Christ's death. They were still dreaming of the kingdom of this world. To impress more deeply on their minds that those who seek to follow Jesus must not strive for this kingdom, the Lord displayed before their eyes a spectacle to ridicule the glory of this world as being a fleeting thing and soon to perish. And by the same token he declared plainly that he could have commanded what he wished and whom he wished, had he not preferred to obey the Father's will.[1] Finally he wished this to serve as testimony to all that he was the one for whom the Jews, following the prophecies of the prophets, had been waiting so many centuries to come for the salvation of the whole world.

He had now advanced closer to Jerusalem, indeed close to Bethphage and Bethany, two small towns on the mountain called the Mount of Olives, whence one could see Jerusalem. From there he dispatched two disciples with the following instructions: 'Go,' he said, 'into that village which you see on the other side. When you enter the gate you will find tied there a young donkey, as yet unbroken, on whom no man has ever sat. Untie him and bring him to me. And if anyone should ask you why you untie the young donkey, say: "The Lord needs it, and he will send it back here to you at once."' The disciples left as they were told, came to the village, found the young donkey tied by the gate at the fork of the road, and untied him. At that some among the bystanders, seeing the young donkey being untied by strangers, said to them: 'What are you doing? Why are you untying the donkey?' The disciples answered exactly as they had been bidden by the Lord: 'The Lord needs it.' Since they did not understand whom the disciples were calling 'Lord,' they asked no further questions and let the donkey go. Having untied the animal, the disciples brought him to Jesus.

Here I want you to take note once again, dear reader, not only of Jesus' words, but also how he conducted himself throughout his life. None of this was done by chance but rather by a divine plan and for the instruction of mankind. For there is nothing that does not have an exemplary character displaying godliness for us, nothing that does not reflect ancient prophecy[2]

or express a figure by which, in a dark manner, the law had designated Christ or a meaning forecasting future events. While this must be studied in all his deeds, they are the more filled with sacred mystery the closer the day of his death came, by which he was chiefly to carry out the business of our salvation. Indeed now that time was drawing near which he who so urgently desired the salvation of all had predicted: 'When I shall be raised up from the earth, I shall draw all to myself.'[3] For Judaea was too narrow for his love;[4] and there the fruit of the gospel did not correspond to the effort and zeal of the tiller. Thus the young unbroken donkey was brought, on whom no man had yet sat. This is the nation of gentiles,[5] neither obeying the law of nature, nor yet serving the Mosaic law; for Moses had weighed down the back of the donkey, that is the synagogue,[6] and so had the prophets. In order to summon the gentiles, however, some of the new disciples were dispatched to call them, not to Moses, but to Jesus. There would be no lack of men to object: 'What are you doing? Why are you untying the donkey?' For the donkey had both many and uncertain masters.[7] He was tied down and was standing at the crossroad. The man who does not obey the law of God has as many masters as vices that he serves. And he is so tied down that he has no home but stands out in the open highway for anyone to take. But when Jesus calls, no one can resist. The Jews cried out: 'This salvation was promised to us. How is it that we share it with gentiles and worshippers of idols?' They were told that he who is the Lord of all needs such donkeys. He was weary now of his vain labours among the Jews and wished to repose quietly on a young and unbroken donkey. His lack of training did not offend him, as long as he had the obedience of faith. A new rider must have a new beast of burden.

The apostles played a supporting role in this act,[8] even though they did not yet understand its meaning. They covered the donkey with their own cloaks, lest Jesus should sit on his bare back. Imitate the disciples' concern, you who are a teacher of the gospel. Whenever you see an unbroken young donkey tied down by the wayside, ignorant of the gospel law, subject to many vices – on account of folly rather than wickedness – one who is about to obey if someone leads him away, untie him, bring him to Jesus, and cover him with the cloak of salutary doctrine.[9] Then the Lord of all, Jesus, will consider him worthy of riding. Imitate also the zeal of the others who, as Jesus set out, strewed his path with their garments, that is, with examples of evangelical piety.[10] There were some who decked the road with boughs cut down from trees, especially from palm trees – the type of virgins and martyrs.[11] On such a road, on such a beast of burden, the Lord of all, Jesus, intends to progress royally and with magnificence.

Compare this sight, dear reader, with one of those who hold first place

among the Jewish priests. And first stop to consider who it is that is carried on the donkey's back, how great he is. He is the Son of God, to whom the Father has given all power in heaven and on earth.[12] He is the Saviour and the ruler of the whole world; the author, lord, and king of all that has been created; a priest for all eternity, according to the order of Melchisedech,[13] who with a word could do whatever he wished; whose majesty all orders of angels adore, who sits at the right hand of the almighty Father.[14] Compare with his dignity the high priest of one temple who has bought the priesthood for a year's duration from an impious ruler at a shameful price. Compare the bare head of Jesus with the priest's tiara, sparkling with gold and gems. Compare Jesus' modest and gentle mien with his face puffed up with pride, his grim forehead, his knotted brows, his haughty eyes, his sneering mouth. Compare Jesus' bare hands with his fingers covered with rings and gems. Compare Jesus' simple and common robe with his pompous and ornate dress, in which there is nothing less than purple and gold. Compare the cloaks of the disciples with his golden saddle blankets, his hyacinth-coloured coverlets, his gilded silver stirrups. Compare that common mount of Jesus, a young donkey, with the high priest's numerous mules covered with fine linen and gold, the many proud horses, the many ponies bought at a high price, the many chariots, sedans, and litters provided to carry one man. Compare the few and humble disciples of Jesus with the more than royal procession of heralds, splendid pages, trumpets and clarions, attendants and escorts, squadrons of men on horse and on foot, among whom the most arrogant is the closest associate and greatest favourite of the high priest.

Compare the acclamations of the boys who preceded and followed Jesus and who were singing, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the verse from the prophecy of the psalm: 'Hosanna (that is, Bring salvation)![15] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed be the kingdom of our father David which is at hand! Hosanna in the highest!' – compare these words with the worldly acclamations of the chorus flattering the wicked Jewish high priest: 'Long live the most holy high priest! Victory to the highest priest of God! May the most blessed prince of religion rule!' That Jesus was opposed to high priests of this kind is clear from the fact that he commanded that proud and pretentious priesthood to be destroyed together with its temple.[16] For they are the ones through whom even today Jesus is slain in his members, when he wishes to be the sole prince of priesthood. For he seeks ministers to bring him a donkey, to strew their coats before him, to cover the road with palm branches, to acknowledge with pious acclamations that the gospel rule promised by the prophets has come. He does not listen to the hostile mumblings of the Pharisees, who are displeased with these acclama-

tions. 'The very stones,' he says, 'will raise their voice before the glory of God is silenced.'[17] In such a procession Jesus, the king, entered the royal city,[18] Jerusalem – a heavenly priest entering his temple – and there taught the people as becomes a king and priest. He healed the sick, he restored the weak, as if he were seizing absolute command in another man's kingdom. In the mean time the impious priests and Pharisees together with the leaders of the people were vexed, but the simple, docile crowd acclaimed Jesus.

As if to restore the tottering religion of the temple, which at that time seemed to the Pharisees to be at its high point, Jesus looked around the whole temple, observing whether there were any practices unworthy of God's temple, not that he was much concerned about what was going on in the temple – for he knew that shortly it would have to be destroyed[19] – but he wished to reveal by a corporeal figure what he wanted the nature of his church, which he was building out of living stones, to be.[20] Among them it was right for the high priest to walk around and look out lest any practice profane the temple that was dedicated to God. It is profaned by ambition, shameful greed, avarice, and falsehood. Such abominations the Lord Jesus does not suffer in his temple.

And when the evening drew near, he returned to Bethany, for Jesus could not find hospitality in such an opulent and proud city.[21] O pinnacle of religion that cannot suffer the leader of all religion! O city, falsely called Jerusalem,[22] blinded by earthly desires you cannot recognize your peacemaker! O blessed Bethany, who deserved to have Jesus as her guest, unaided by the works of the law, through the simple obedience of faith!

When Jesus left Bethany on the following day and returned to Jerusalem at daybreak, he began to feel hungry on the way – in truth, hungry for man's salvation;[23] and it was the most gratifying food to him to redeem mankind according to the Father's will; but also, according to the human nature that he had assumed, he was indeed hungry and experienced hunger pangs just as other men,[24] because his body was dried out. Thus, when he saw from afar a fig tree with green leaves, promising some fruit, he hurried up to it to see if it bore anything to assuage his hunger. It is a sore pain when you are hungry and have nothing to eat; but it is a worse kind of pain when men perish through their unbelief while you desire to save them. When he had come to the fig tree and found that he had been deceived by the inviting foliage and was unable to find any fruit, he cursed it, saying: 'Let none eat fruit from you thereafter in all eternity.' The disciples secretly wondered why he had cursed a tree, especially since it was not yet the season when this type of fig tree bears fruit. Indeed physical hunger brings with it a certain bitterness, but evangelical hunger more so. Any delay of salvation was too long for Christ. Yet trees have their fixed season when

they produce their fruit, so that it appears unfair to curse the tree with lasting barrenness because it did not produce before its time. Moreover, what was the significance of Jesus' hurrying up to the fig tree to find out if there was any fruit, when he knew that there was none?[25] This behaviour – absurd[26] according to its outward appearance – attracted the apostles' attention[27] and led them to ponder the mystical sense. The Lord Jesus, who was most hungry for man's salvation, found fruit in barren trees that held out no hope: in prostitutes, in tax collectors, in sinners, in pagans, in the Canaanite woman, among the Samaritans. Only among the priests, scribes, and Pharisees,[28] who held out a great promise of bearing the sweetest fruit of the gospel, he could find no fruit at all. They were holding the citadel of religion, they were continually in the temple, they had the law and the prophets at their fingertips, they were pale with fasting, they uttered long prayers, they gave alms, even their stoles and broad phylacteries had a wonderful aspect of piety. These were the foliage, promising fruit ripe before its time. The Lord wished to teach that there was nothing more hopeless than ungodliness having the false appearance of religion.

That fig tree deserved Jesus' curse so that no one might be deceived by the glory of its foliage and no one in future might expect from this kind of man the fruit of sweetest evangelical charity.

Thus, leaving behind the fig tree that had no merit, they came to Jerusalem, which had a fig tree in the moral sense, nourished and fertilized in vain over a long time and producing nothing but foliage. And when Jesus entered the temple, he once again displayed an image to remind us of the purity that becomes the evangelical church, the purity that becomes the heart dedicated to the Spirit of Christ. With a whip of twisted cord he drove the crowd of buyers and sellers from the temple and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the stands of the dove-vendors. Nor did he tolerate anyone carrying a profane vessel through the temple. And, lest he seem angry without reason, he added Isaiah's testimony. 'Is it not written,' he said, '"my house shall be called a house of prayer among all peoples" [Isa 56:7]? But you have turned it into a den of thieves who commit the same crimes under the pretext of religious rites as thieves on the highways.'

The Lord had no great concern for the purity of the temple, which he wished to abolish together with its ceremonies, but he commended to us the special purity of the new temple, whose architect he himself was to be, indicating moreover, that priests, scribes, and Pharisees were justly to be removed from their position of religious authority since they had defiled and profaned that old and figurative religion with their avarice, fraudulence, pretence, and all kind of filth. Nowhere do we read of Jesus having been aroused in equal measure, nowhere having acted with equal rage. What

would he do if he saw the church, his bride, which he washed with his own blood so that she might appear pure, free of all blemish and wrinkle, being profaned, violated, and sullied with all kind of filth by the bishops put in charge of the church, who offer for sale not only cattle and doves, but all sacred things,[29] which cannot be bestowed for any price nor be bought? No doubt he sees but overlooks it; such men, therefore, will not escape punishment, even though God in his goodness bears with them to make them repent. But the day will come when a terrible whip will be twisted for them, a fearsome scourge to cast the violators of the holy temple into hell.

What followed makes you understand what a plague the avarice of the priests and Pharisees is: when those who held first place among the priests and scribes and to whom the greatest part of the profit accrued saw what was going on, they sought a way to destroy Jesus. O truly barren and cursed fig tree! They prided themselves on being the leaders of pure religion, and they were indignant that those who profaned it were being cast out of the temple. They had a wicked heart prepared to commit murder, but they were on the look-out for an opportunity safely to accomplish their design. They alone were unable to love our lovable Jesus, who did harm to no one, who brought help to all. They feared him only because the people admired his teaching and thought highly of him on account of the miracles that they had witnessed. O corrupt religion in teachers of religion! Having conceived such a wicked deed, they did not fear God the avenger from whom nothing is hidden – they feared the people. Why did they not at least fear Jesus himself? They had seen and heard the many miracles worked by him, which clearly attested to the divine power present in him whenever he wished. He who can cast out demons can with even greater ease send them into a man. He who can recall the dead to life with a word can even more easily take away life. If they thought him so merciful that he did not wish to harm anyone, although he had the power, why did they plot to kill him? If they believed that he would do what he had in his power to do, why did they not refrain from so wicked a deed, at least for fear of vengeance? Yes, such was the incurable blindness of those who thought that they alone had eyes.

When night approached once more, Jesus, who had spent the whole day in the temple fasting, left Jerusalem. So often he leaves the city, offended by their stubborn unbelief: so often he returns in hopes of finding some fruit in so magnificent a display of foliage. Oh that the cursed fig tree had only been barren and had not produced lethal poison! Now that the time of his death had come, Jesus allowed no time to elapse without yielding fruit. He spent the day in the temple and devoted the night to prayer, privately raising the spirits of his disciples.

In the morning when they returned once more from Bethany to

Jerusalem and passed the fig tree, the disciples noticed that the tree had now dried up, from the very roots to the highest top. Peter remembered what Jesus had done the day before and recognized the fig tree that had been cursed and, marvelling at it having so suddenly and totally dried out from the root up, said to the Lord: 'My master, behold, the fig tree you cursed has now dried up.' Peter marvelled at this though he had often seen him do greater things; indeed, he was forgetful of the fact that nothing is so difficult that faith cannot bring it about.[30] All gospel fruit springs from faith: because faith is lacking in the synagogue, we see it dried up. But the church of the gentiles blossoms and branches out, bearing so many crowns of martyrs, so many gems of virgins, so many examples of virtues. What, on the other hand, is more hopeless, more abject, and more barren than the Jewish people? For where is the authority of the law? Where the marvellous show of religion? Where the temple? Where the pride of the scribes and Pharisees? Has not the whole fig tree dried up?

'If you want to flourish,' he said, 'have faith, not in your strength, but in God. Of this I assure you: if a man with unwavering faith in God commands a fig tree to dry up – a feat which you admire – he will not only achieve this at once, but even if he said to this mountain "Move from this place and cast yourself into the sea," though that seems almost impossible, yet if he said it without a doubt in his heart and having conceived in his mind the certainty that whatever he said would come to pass, his command will be realized. This is what faith in God will do: you will seek nothing from him in vain. Likewise you must believe that with me as guarantor, whatsoever you seek from the Father without doubting, he will grant your wish, and you will obtain it – if only your mind is free from the desire for revenge, if only you seek a salutary thing. He who doubts will have no effect. For he who doubts either believes that the Father cannot grant it – when he can do anything with a word – or that he does not wish to grant what is rightfully sought.

'Nor will he achieve anything who is confident but in an impudent manner, who asks the Father to pardon the trespasses he has committed against God, while for his part he is unwilling to forgive his brother's trespasses against himself. Furthermore, when you set yourself to pray, forgive in your heart anyone who has offended you in any matter; on this condition your Father who is in heaven will pardon your sins. For if you are unwilling to forgive your neighbour the wrong committed against yourself, your heavenly Father will not be indulgent towards the sins committed against him.'

Having discussed this on the way, they once again reached Jerusalem, and Jesus went to the temple, as was his custom. Jesus' presence in the temple signifies salvation in the church. And no place is more appropriate for

those who are Christ's vicars than the temple. They 'are in the temple' if they concern themselves with things that are of God, not things that are of this world. What business has a bishop in a military camp? The Pharisees, scribes, priests, and elders were in the temple in body – in spirit they were far away from it.

When those therefore who held first place among the priests – having aligned themselves with the scribes and leaders of the people to give the proceedings an aspect of legitimacy – saw Jesus in the temple holding the multitude spellbound with his teaching and ruling by the force of his miracles as if in another's kingdom (for he had cast out the traders and shut out those who carried vessels through the temple), they approached him, interrupted him, and brought up the old calumny anew, saying: 'By whose authority are you doing this? And who has given you licence to do so?' They could not refute his teaching, they could not deny the many and manifest miracles, they could not slander him, because he had concentrated all his efforts on helping the people, and that without recompense. They were seeking a handle for slandering him with regard to his authority, for they were unwilling to have this glory attributed to God and wished their own authority to be preponderant everywhere. If Jesus, whom they thought to be nothing but a man, had claimed for himself the authority of God, they would have had a pretence to accuse him of blasphemy.[31] If he made no such claim, they had ready cause to accuse him of sedition for presuming to do such a thing in the temple on private authority, without the permission of the priests and elders. But why was it necessary to raise the question of authority, when the facts themselves declared that what was done was done on God's authority; when the facts themselves indicated that he was the one whose coming God had once promised through the prophets; when the Father had declared after his baptism, with his own voice, that this was his only beloved Son whom they must obey? Now the authority of the priests, used wrongly, had no other effect than to impede the glory of God. But their wrong desire nevertheless promoted the cause, illuminating the goodness and power of God.

Jesus was not unaware of their intentions, for they were going to slander him, whatever his reply. Nor had the time come to say who he was. He therefore repulsed their insidious question with a prudent question in turn: 'I shall answer your inquiry under this condition,' he said, 'that you answer my question first. Was John's baptism done on the authority of heaven or men? Answer me this question.' How easily divine wisdom traps human cleverness, which uses all stratagems against God's counsel! They had a heart full of human cunning, they summoned every trick in their hearts, and they who would trap him found that snares were laid for

themselves.[32] This is what they thought in their hearts: 'If we say "from heaven" he will answer: "Then why did you not believe him when he bore witness on my behalf?" If we say "from men" we run the risk of having the people rise up against us' – for John's authority and his venerable memory were in the highest regard among the people; no one had any doubt that he was truly a prophet.

Thus, although they were proud, they preferred embarrassment to being refuted or stoned.[33] Therefore they answered Jesus' demand for a reply by saying: 'We do not know.' Jesus repaid them in kind, saying: 'If you deny to my face that you know what you do know, I in turn shall refuse to tell you on whose authority I do what I do. Compare my deeds with his, and consider whether it is appropriate to doubt my authority when there was no doubt about his authority.'

Chapter 12

When the priests, scribes, and leaders had somehow evaded this question, sensing the pitfall, the Lord Jesus, through a figure, put another question to them. If they answered it unwisely they would condemn their own wickedness and establish that the authority on which they had prided themselves so far was rightly to be transferred to others. The parable ran as follows: A man had planted a vineyard and surrounded it with a hedge, lest it be exposed to trespassers, and he dug out a vat to hold the fresh wine, and finally he built on it a tower to protect the vineyard. Thus abundantly provided with all things, he let it to tenant farmers and soon afterwards went abroad.

When the vintage season came, he sent his servant to the farmers to whom he had let the vineyard that he might receive from his tenants the fruit which the vineyard had yielded. But they joined in a conspiracy, seized the servant, flogged him, and sent him back empty-handed. The kind landlord sent them another of his servants. But they, made worse men by the lord's gentleness, cast rocks at the servant, beat him about the head,[1] covered him with contumely, and sent him back without fruit, but weighed down with insult.

But the lord in his great mercy still did not have recourse to revenge, but sent them a servant for a third time. This one they killed. When he sent others again in succession, they beat them or killed them all. His only son, whom he loved tenderly, was the sole remaining one. Thus, to leave nothing untried in his wonderful mercy, he finally sent him to the farmers, thinking in his heart: 'Although they treated my servants with contempt, they will at least respect this, my son.' But the wickedness of the farmers surpassed all

the goodness of the lord. When they saw that his son was at hand, they devised an even more wicked plan: 'This man,' they said, 'is his heir. Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours.' And they seized him and cast him out of the vineyard and thereafter killed him.

When the parable had been told, the Lord asked the priests and scribes: 'What then will the lord of the vineyard do with such tenants?' At first they did not realize the purport of the simile and answered, pronouncing sentence on their own heads: 'He will come himself and exact punishment from the tenants, and he will let his vineyard to others who keep better faith.'

When Jesus had expressed his approval of their reply, he added the testimony of the psalm, asking them, who claimed knowledge of the law, to interpret it. 'And have you not also read this,' he asked: '"The stone the builders rejected was made the keystone. It was made by the Lord and is marvellous to behold" [Ps 118:22]?'

At this point they became alert and realized that their wicked plans had not escaped Jesus' notice and that the hidden meaning of this parable depicted their own incurable malice. God had entrusted to them his people, to be tended with special care, like a vineyard that had been diligently equipped with everything concerning the subject of godliness. He himself, as though absenting himself, had allowed them to do as they pleased.[2] But they tended the vineyard for themselves, not for the Lord, who should have received the fruit. Through a number of prophets[3] he reminded them, who were neglectful, of their duty, but they went from bad to worse. Finally they were about to drive Jesus, the only Son of God, from Jerusalem and to kill him, hoping that after his death the ownership of the vineyard and its government would for all time pass into their hands. But the opposite was to happen, namely (God having so many times been spurned), the temple and the dignity of religion would, by just vengeance, be taken from them and given to the apostles. Then Jesus, whom they had rejected in building the synagogue, as if he were a faulty stone, was chosen, by the will of God and contrary to their expectations, to be the keystone in the structure of the church, which was to be built of Jews and gentiles alike,[4] so that he might rest immobile at the centre and hold up both people like two walls in the evangelical faith. They understood the parable, they recognized the prophecy, yet they did not repent, blinded by their malice; but being afraid of the people surrounding him, they left Jesus alone and went away, to achieve by tricks and stratagems what they could not do openly.

Murder committed under the pretext of sanctity and justice is the most abominable kind of homicide. Pretending to be silenced, they now quietly suborned some especially wicked men among the Pharisees and Herodians

who disagreed among each other about doctrine, but agreed in their hatred of Jesus.[5] O foolish wisdom of this world! Overcome so many times, they returned again and again so that it might become entirely clear that they were defeated by all measures and departed worsted by divine counsel. For now the time had come for Satan, who when he first approached the Lord had come away vanquished, to apply all war engines through his followers.

Thus the actors who had been suborned for this play approached Jesus and, proposing a captious question, laid traps for Jesus so that he might say something on the basis of which they could accuse him before the emperor's prefect. They prefaced their words with flattery – as if he could be deceived by flattery, who had shown so many times that he knew all. 'Master,' they said, 'we know you speak the truth and fear no one but utter the truth without respect of persons. For the office and high station of a man does not move you, as it does many people who curry favour with the powerful. You spurn men and teach openly what God has decreed. Tell us, therefore, is it permissible to pay tax to Caesar or not?' The Pharisees had argued that a people dedicated to God ought not to be a tributary to the secular rulers and worshippers of idols.[6] The Herodians, on the other hand, observed imperial law. And the purport of this insidious preface was this: if Jesus pronounced in favour of the Pharisees the Herodians would report him as being the author of a rebellion against Caesar.[7]

Jesus, however, was quite aware of their cunning, and being angry that they had come, not to learn, but to tempt him, he said: 'Why are you tempting me? Show me a denarius, that I may inspect it.' A denarius was produced. For they gladly acted in accordance with their cunning plan, having come to ensnare him. Jesus inspected the denarius and said: 'Whose image and legend is this?' They answered him: 'Caesar's.' What? Did Jesus, to whom nothing is unknown, not know the image or legend of Caesar, while the Pharisees and Herodians knew it? He knew it even before he had looked at it, but he was seeking an opportunity to give a suitable answer[8] to their captious question. He gave us a demonstration that those who profess to be vicars of Christ must not be wise in the business of princes, but ought to teach heavenly things.

Now hear a reply worthy of Christ; 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's,' he said, 'and to God what is God's.' He did not disapprove of anyone dedicated to God giving to an emperor, however wicked, what was owed him on account of his official function or what he exacted by force, for loss of money does not make men wicked. But he counsels us on this occasion regarding a matter more apposite: to give to God what is owed to him. The filthy coin bears Caesar's legend and image. If you acknowledge that and

pay to Caesar what is owed to him, how much more ought you to give to God, whose image every man bears.[9] In baptism the stamp of God is impressed on your soul;[10] why do you surrender it to the devil? You glory in the title 'Christian'; why do you not render unto him what you owe him on account of your profession? Everyone admired Jesus' prudent answer. One sentence imposed silence on two Jewish sects.

Thereafter came the sect of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection of bodies and say that all of man perishes in death; and they do not believe that there is any spirit,[11] disagreeing herein with the Pharisees. These rude minds, too, had a captious question to tempt divine wisdom. At that time Jesus played the role of a private man, but the most lowly quality in him was more sublime than the noblest in man.

This is how they approached him: 'Master, Moses, according to Deuteronomy,[12] left us the law that if a married man dies childless, the brother who is closest in age to the deceased man marries the widow and begets of her an heir bearing the deceased man's name. If the brother too dies without heir, the next born succeeds to his brother's place. Now it happened that the oldest of seven brothers took a wife. He died childless. The next born succeeded him according to the decree of the law and brought the widow into his home. When he too died childless, the third brother succeeded, and after him the rest in like manner down to the seventh. One after the other took her as his wife and each died childless. At length the woman herself died. Thus, when the time of resurrection comes, and the seven brothers come back to life together with the woman, who will claim her as his wife? For she was duly married to all seven during her lifetime. The Sadducees thought that with this absurd case they would ridicule and make absurd the resurrection of the dead,[13] if on account of a wife whom all shared there would arise a quarrel among the brothers.

Jesus, however, was not reluctant to teach them in their crass ignorance,[14] saying: 'Does not this question show that you are completely off the path? For you do not understand either Scripture or the power of God. Scripture has a spiritual sense; and God, who created man out of nothing, can return the dead to life, if he wishes.[15] Not only will he recall the dead to life, but he will also give them immortality. Moreover, marriage has been instituted among mortals so that what is in itself not lasting would be propagated by one generation begetting another.[16] But when there are no births and, conversely, no deaths, what need is there for marriage? For at the time of the resurrection of the dead no one will take a wife and no one will give his daughter in marriage, but rather, like the angels of God in heaven, they do not know marriage because there is no death among them. This will be the nature of those who will come to life in resurrection: they will then be similar to the angels, with a spiritual and immortal body. Why, moreover,

does it seem absurd to you that the dead should rise again? Have you not read in the holy books that have inviolable authority among you what God said when he spoke to Moses from the bramble bush? "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob" [Ex 3:6]. They were dead at the time, still he called himself their God. Thus even the dead live, because their souls survive. If they survive, why is it such a great matter to recall them to the bodies in whom they once dwelt? If they perish immediately, it would be absurd for God to be called the God of the dead. Just as no one prides himself on being king over those who do not exist, so God is the God of the living, not the dead. You Sadducees are therefore completely wrong when you think that there will be nothing different in that future life from what you perceive in the present one. Those things that are unseen are truer and more blessed than those that are seen with the eyes of the body. For nothing is truer than God, yet he is not perceived here, only sensed.'

This was not the end of the temptations. The Pharisees and scribes followed upon the Sadducees. The Sadducees' ignorance of the law – made a reproach to them – had given them courage. For the scribes and Pharisees boasted more than anyone else of their knowledge of the law and, dissenting from the Sadducees, they believed in angels and spirits, and that the souls of men survived the death of the body, and finally that there would be a resurrection. They rejoiced that the Sadducees had been refuted and that Jesus had given them an answer after their own heart. They suborned one of the scribes to ask, in scholarly style, a special question drawn from the inner mysteries of the law. Thus they asked him what was the principal and most important commandment in the law.

But Jesus answered them without hesitation, citing Deuteronomy: '"Hear Israel, the Lord is your God, God is one. Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your soul, and all your mind, and with all your power" [Deut 6:4–5]. This is the principal and most important commandment. Next to it is this: Love your neighbour like yourself. There is no greater commandment than those two because they encompass the sum of the whole law.'

When the scribe heard this, he said 'You have answered well and truly that there is one God and no other beside him. And to love him with your whole heart and your whole mind and your whole soul and all your powers is more important than burnt offerings and the other sacrifices.'

Seeing that he had answered sensibly,[17] Jesus said to him: 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' Indeed, evangelical piety does not lie in animal sacrifices but in spiritual purity. He comes close to this insight who prefers what is spiritual and simple to all other commandments, which bear the figure of true piety rather than piety itself. The common Jewish people, on the other hand, believe that the sum of piety lies in things that are discerned

with the eye: in ablutions, in the observance of the Sabbath, in choice of foods, in alms, in sacrifices, in feast days, in fasting, and in lengthy prayers. He who loves God for his own sake with his whole heart – God who can never be loved enough – and who loves his neighbour for the sake of God, has offered abundant sacrifice.

When the wisdom of Jesus had won the day all round, they left off tempting him, lest they suffer further embarrassment before the people. They thought of Jesus as a private man, while they with their magnificent titles and theatrical guise all but played God before the inexperienced multitude. Indeed, evangelical wisdom does not lie in a multitude of learnt disciplines, but in sincerity of spirit. What Jesus was considered among the scribes, Pharisees, priests, and leaders of the people, the unlearned apostles were thereafter considered among philosophers and rulers.

Although they left off tempting him, Jesus did not leave off teaching. For while all were assembled, he posed the question: 'Whose son was the Messiah whom they were expecting?' When they answered: 'David,' citing the prophets,[18] he introduced the following insoluble dilemma: 'How can it be maintained that the Messiah is the son of David,' he said, 'when David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, spoke thus in the psalm: "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" [Ps 110:1]? If the authority of the forefathers is greater than that of the descendants, how can David call him who is to be born from him "his Lord" – as if a father called his son "Lord."' The Scribes and Pharisees, who had a carnal mind, could not yet understand this mystery. For David, inspired by the heavenly Spirit, had seen in Christ, who was not yet born, something greater than a man, whereas he himself was nothing but a man. When the scribes and Pharisees fell silent, the majority of the people inclined towards Jesus and listened willingly to his teaching.

When he saw that the people could be saved, whereas the priests, scribes, and Pharisees went on in their stubborn malice as before, he began to accuse them openly before the people, not to slander them, but to pull off their mask of false piety and sanctimony, lest they deceive the people thereafter. For now the time demanded it. Thus he unfolded his teaching, that is, a frank doctrine flattering no one, saying: 'Take care lest the grand appearance of the scribes and Pharisees deceive you. They do not strive after your salvation but after their own glory. To appear grand, they like to promenade in robes down to their ankles; they are keen on being greeted with deference in public; they grasp at the dignity of having front seats at meetings and the place of honour at banquets. They say long prayers so that they may appear to be more pious than the rest. By such artifice they capture widows who are blessed but simple-minded and for more than one reason

easily deceived: either because their sex is weaker or because they are widows and deprived of the protection of their husbands or because they are rich. They impose on them under the guise of being their patrons and protectors,[19] and under the pretence of religion devour their whole house. Yet their pretence and show of religion will not benefit them; rather they will be condemned by God the more sharply because they covered up their malice by the artifice of sanctimony. Be careful, then, lest you be deceived by them.'

When this had been settled, Jesus went into that part of the temple in which the treasury is located, where the temple donations were kept. Sitting opposite the treasury he looked at those who threw alms into it. And many rich men cast in great gifts. These men the priests wished to be considered holier than the rest, measuring their piety by their donations. In the mean time a woman approached, a poor widow. She threw in two small coins which made up one quadrant. There was no one who did not put those rich men before that lowly little woman. But Jesus' verdict was far different from the verdict of the scribes and Pharisees, and he did not want this to remain unknown to his disciples. 'I want you to know,' he said, 'that this widow, however lowly, has put more into the treasury than all the rest who appear to have given very liberally. For the others gave from their abundance. They gave much, but they kept even more for themselves. She, however, gave generously in her poverty, giving all she had, holding back nothing for herself. For God does not measure gifts by the amount of money, but by the attitude of the mind.'[20]

In such a widow does Jesus rejoice, and he thinks her worthy of his being her bridegroom and comforter. The synagogue,[21] like an arrogant matron, boasts of the wealth of her justice; she displays the rich ornament of good works; she glories in her husband Moses, to whom she was never obedient; she prides herself on her sons, the prophets, all of whom she killed in wicked parricide or at any rate persecuted; the temple of God, the law of God, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel – these are names that are for ever on her lips; she walks in the company of priests, scribes, and Pharisees. But the church, like a poor lowly widow, has nothing to show, she acknowledges the dearth of her good works, yet she consecrates to God what little she has. What can be poorer than such a widow, who leaves nothing for herself? She does not recognize Moses as her husband, for she does not know circumcision; she abhors sacrifices of animals, content to sacrifice herself completely. But the Lord, her bridegroom, having left the earth and returned to heaven, seems to have deserted his widow,[22] who is now despoiled by Jews and gentiles like one destitute of all aid, and she is exiled, thrown into prison, afflicted, and oppressed. Every day she is told:

'Where is your bridegroom?' She seems on the verge of starving, for she has so little; and what little she had, she threw away. It appears that she will die shortly with the reproach of barrenness, for she has lost her husband. But Isaiah consoles the widow who is past hope in the eyes of the world: 'Rejoice, o barren woman,' he says, 'that you do not give birth; leap up and raise your voice because you have no birth pangs, for you will have more sons than she who has a husband' [Isa 54:1]. Do we not see this prophecy come true? The synagogue starves and dies, the church is increased and spread abroad, triumphant in her martyrs, flourishing in her virgins, rejoicing in so many confessors. She no longer has the quadrant out of her own means, she has gold proved and pure out of the wealth of her bridegroom. She has gems of inestimable value. Through her sincere faith in the wealthy bridegroom, she has whatever he has. The synagogue, although she seemed to give much to God, kept back more for herself. Do you wish to see an example of the synagogue's largesse? Listen to the Pharisee praying:[23] 'I give thanks to you, God, because I am not like other men.' Now see how much he reserves for himself: 'I fast twice on the Sabbath, I give a tithe of all my belongings to the poor.' Now, on the other hand, contemplate the appearance of the widow. She beats her breast, she does not dare to lift her eyes to heaven, she merely cries out: 'Lord bestow your favour on this sinner.' While the synagogue boasts of her justice,[24] she has neither her own, nor God's justice; while the church relinquishes all praise for justice and acknowledges her injustice, she is enriched with the justice of the bridegroom.

Chapter 13

Nothing pleased Jesus there in the temple except a humble widow, in whom there was nothing but a shadowy sketch of piety. Let us, who profess to be disciples of Jesus, also leave the Jewish temple, let us cast off our trust in carnal works, and let us embrace justice, which comes through evangelical faith. Thus being about to build for us another temple, he left one truly holy and spiritual, a solid and firm structure 'against which even the gates of hell would not prevail' [Matt 16:18]. On the way out, one of the disciples said to him: 'Master, behold the huge stone blocks of this temple, its solid structure' – indicating thereby that the building was so strong that it could not collapse, however much time passed. O eyes of a Jew! They admire a stone front built by the hands of men – as if Jesus could take pleasure in such a structure!

Jesus answered him: 'Do you see this great foundation which has cost so much effort? Far from this structure lasting for ever in the future, there will

come a time when no stone will be left on the other that will not be destroyed.' In his desire for a spiritual temple, Jesus was now looking down on everything and treating with contempt everything that could be discerned with the eyes of the body.

Moreover, when he was resting on that part of the Mount of Olives where he had chosen to spend the night and where they were within sight of the temple, the disciples were reminded of the words by which he had predicted that the temple would be razed to the ground. For they expected that upon the temple's destruction the kingdom of God, of which they had not ceased dreaming, would come about.[1] Thus four of the disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, approached Jesus as he was sitting by himself. Their purpose was to make him communicate to a few the time of the coming of the kingdom – something he would not entrust to the others as a group – just as he had entrusted the secret of his transfiguration to a few separately.[2]

Thus they said: 'Tell us, when will it happen and by what sign shall we be able to recognize that the time has come?' But the Lord, who had freed his people from anxious care about their livelihood, from the desire for revenge, and from taking forethought for their life,[3] also wished to free them from the curiosity to know things that did not pertain to salvation. Thus he tempered his speech to indicate that the destruction of the city of Jerusalem would come at some time in the future and that after his departure grave storms of persecution would arise against the heralds of the gospel, and that at some time the end of this world would come.

Just as everyone must be aware that at some time he will reach the end of his life so that he must continually prepare for that day, so Jesus wished his disciples to be convinced that the time would come when the judge of the living and the dead would return, but did not wish them to know when this was to come about because it was not expedient for them to know. Thus Jesus began to speak about these things in this manner: 'Take care lest anyone deceive you. For many will come who will lay claim to my name, each of whom will lie and say that he is Christ, and by this ruse they will deceive many who are not cautious. Great disorders in the world will indicate that my coming and the end of the world are near. But you must not be perturbed at once by wars that have arisen or grievous rumours of wars to arise to the extent of believing that the time has now come. For such events, too, will come to pass without being followed immediately by the end of the world. These are only preludes to the world's ending, just as in an aging body frequent illness foreshadows its imminent collapse. A balanced state of things preserves good health.[4] But when the parts are at war with each other and the body is buffeted, it is an indication of the imminent ruin of the whole. For nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, and with huge

troops they will rush upon each other, bringing mutual death. Indeed, even the earth will be shaken by tremors as if she were angry at having to sustain and nourish such wicked men. As a result famine will be widespread. The earth will deny men sustenance. Indeed, the air, too, as if in anger at the impious men who are not worthy of life and breath, will be pestilent and fatal. Even when you see many things like these arise, do not immediately expect the end. For these things, too, will only be the onset and prelude of the coming calamity.

'Not even you yourselves will be immune to these evils; therefore be on guard lest things overwhelm you unexpectedly. For they will accuse you before councils and synagogues and you will stand before kings and governors, defending yourselves on capital charges for no other crime than that you have professed my name. Thus it will be revealed that they who have treated the kingdom's heralds in this manner were rightly rejected by the kingdom of God. But let this in no way trouble your minds. For the savagery of impious men will not succeed in impeding the progress of the gospel. And no one will be able to do away with you before your time. For the end of the world will not come until the gospel has been preached throughout all the nations. There is no need for you, therefore, to rally worldly resources against the violence of your persecutors or worry how to escape their judgments. When you are called before the law, go, lest you seem to be in contempt of public authority. For this, too, may advance the propagation of the gospel. And as you set out, be not anxious, turning over in your mind what you are going to say and how, since you are ignorant of the laws and inexperienced in legal proceedings – for this is what common people usually do who hire speakers, advocates, and patrons for their lawsuits. But say whatever your heart suggests to you at that time. For you will not be the authors but only the organs of speech. The Holy Spirit will utter through you what will be useful for the cause of the gospel. As for the rest, persecutions of this kind must be expected not only from strangers and enemies, but also from friends and relatives. For brother will hand over brother to the law and demand his execution, without regard for natural affection. And father will turn against son, contrary to natural love and parental duty. Indeed, sons in turn will rise up against their fathers and lead them to death. And though you harm no one but offer a message of salvation to all, you will nevertheless be hated by all who love this world because they envy my name, which you will proclaim. However, in these adversities you must keep a steadfast heart. For whoever perseveres in his resolve to the end will be saved, for no calamity can destroy one trusting in the gospel with a constant heart.

'If you desire a sign of the imminent final calamity: when you see the

abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, read and understand the prophecy of Daniel.[5] For then the time has come to leave all things aside and for each man to look after his own flight and to seek safety, not in his resources, but in speedy flight. Then those who are in the most flourishing part of Judaea and in the most populated part of the region must flee to the wilderness of the mountains. If this calamity befalls a man while he is on his roof,[6] let him not go down into the house or enter the strongroom or bedchamber or take anything away with him, but let him flee as he is. And if at this time a man is working in the field naked, let him not run home to fetch his cloak, but let him flee directly to another place, with such great speed will the wave of this calamity overtake him. And woe to those who are with child or nursing a child at that time, for nature does not permit them to cast off their burden, pious love forbids it. Yet the only way to safety lies in flight without delay. Thus pray to the Lord that this calamity may not strike in winter or on the Sabbath.[7] For you must not only flee quickly, but must go far away. And winter is unsuitable for a long flight because of the shortness of the day. And religion forbids[8] a long journey on the Sabbath.'

What the Lord had said so far was spoken in such a way that it seemed to refer partly to the fall of the city of Jerusalem, partly to the era of persecutions which reached the height of cruelty at the time when Stephen was stoned to death,[9] and partly to the end of the world.[10] For this is not without tropological meaning to teach us that we should free ourselves from all human burdens and to expect at all times that day which brings us before God's judgment. No one can be prepared for it who is drawn back into endangering his eternal salvation either because of his love of temporal things or the affections of the flesh, that is, love for his parents, wife, or children. He is burdened with a 'vessel'[11] who is burdened with wealth and ceases to do what leads to eternal salvation. He is burdened with a 'cloak' who in his concern for the body neglects his spiritual life.[12] She is burdened with 'child' who by reason of natural affections does not refrain from things which she knows must be altogether shunned and who fails to hasten to those which she knows must be sought without delay. 'Winter' holds the fugitives back because they lack the light that faith provides and because charity has grown cold[13] in them so that they do not persevere bravely in the journey on which they have embarked. Moreover the superstitious observance of the Sabbath brings them danger, for in their wrong judgment they tremble with fear where there was no cause of fear and fail to fear the things that they should have principally feared, like someone who neglects God's commandments so as not to violate human constitutions. For the Lord himself clearly taught that the Sabbath of the Jews could rightly be treated with contempt if man's safety was at stake. But what follows appears to

pertain more to the last day of the world, which will be preceded by a great and universal upheaval because of the coming of the Antichrist.

'These days,' he said, 'will be so calamitous that there has not been like affliction from the creation of the world to the present day, nor will there be anything like it thereafter. If this affliction were as lasting as it is cruel, no mortal would be saved. But God in his mercy wished this storm to be brief for the sake of those whom he has chosen for eternal life. For he will not suffer anyone among these to perish, whatever storm of evils arises. Thus there is no reason why anyone should fear for his safety, if only he holds fast to his evangelical faith as to a sacred sheet-anchor. No force will destroy those whose belief in me is constant. Only beware lest you embrace a false Christ instead of me. There will be more danger from impostors than from persecutors. For in those days false Christs will rise up, falsely claiming my name and my person for themselves. And false prophets will arise with a feigned air of sanctity who will lie, asserting that they are prophets. And by magical portents and shadowy miracles wrought by the art of demons they will imitate the prophets and myself so that even the chosen ones could be deceived by tricks of this kind if any force could prevail against God's. Thus if anyone says to you: "Behold, here is Christ,"do not believe him. And if anyone calls you elsewhere, saying: "Behold, here he is,"whatever place he indicates to you, whatever outward show, whatever rite, do not believe him. For once Christ has left this earth, he cannot be pointed out with a finger but will take cover in the heart; and he will be recognized by these signs: whether or not a man bears out Christ's teaching in his life. As for the rest, when the world comes to an end, Christ will not come as he comes now, but suddenly and contrary to anyone's expectation, like lightning from on high, he will show himself terrible to the wicked, who will be cast into the everlasting fire, lovable to pious men, who will be called to share in the kingdom of heaven. If you meet with such times, take care lest you embrace instead of me a false Christ. Behold, I have predicted everything to you. It remains that you be mindful of it.

'Verily, after these calamities of war, persecution, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes have come to pass, other portents will succeed, sent from heaven as if all elements with heated passion prepared vengeance for impious men. For the sun, the source of light, will darken as if to reproach the impious for their blindness and for having been unwilling to see that eternal sun; nor will the moon, which is wont to dispel the darkness of the night, reflect the splendour borrowed from the sun. Moreover, stars will be seen falling out of heaven unto earth, stars that for many centuries have been fastened in the sky for the benefit of mankind. Indeed the heavenly forces, by whose admirable power these bodies observed the courses prescribed by

God and the functions ascribed them from the beginning of the world, will be shaken, – so great will be the terror of the imminent last judgment. When these things have come to pass, all men alive will suddenly behold the Son of man, who is now humble and despised, shining forth from the clouds on high, possessed of the great power and glory of the Father and accompanied by an innumerable host of angels.[14] Then he will send out his angels, who will not allow any of the chosen ones to be missing but will gather them from everywhere, dead or alive, instantly to be recalled to life. All members of the mystical body will be gathered to their head,[15] so that those who were his companions in the afflictions suffered on behalf of the gospel may likewise be his companions in eternal bliss.[16] And it does not matter where the souls of the pious have winged their way, where the bodies have been strewn; they will be found by the angels and gathered from the four corners of the world, from the highest pole of heaven to the lowest. Each soul will be joined to its body, and all the chosen ones will likewise be joined to their head.

'Furthermore, lest this time find you unaware, you may divine from certain signs that it is now near in the same way as you gather from the fig tree that summer is about to come. For when the branches of that tree become tender as if to give birth to young figs, and when the leaves sprout forth, you know that summer cannot be far off. But the coming of that day is more certain than summer following upon winter. I assure you this age will not pass without all of this coming about. Among corporeal things nothing is firmer than heaven, nothing more immobile than the earth; verily, heaven and earth will sooner change their nature than my words come to naught. Let it not be your concern to know with certainty when that final day will come, for it is not even for angels to know, nor for the Son himself. And because the Father in his wisdom saw that this would be expedient for your salvation, he has reserved this secret for himself.

'You may be sure that it will come. Do not ask when, lest a feeling of security overcome you. Be always on guard, be always watchful, and pray continually, since you do not know when it will happen, when this terrible day will befall you. You will be on guard if you do not rely on any resources of this world or on any human creature, but depend wholly on my precepts. You will be vigilant if you abstain from self-indulgence and all bodily desires, if you are wholly intent on the spirit of holiness. You will pray if you yearn with burning hearts for what the gospel has promised to those who are constant in their profession. Satan has his own arts through which he deceives even the keen-sighted. Against them one must use the cunning of a snake.[17] The world and the flesh have their own allurements, by which they flatter the hearts of unthinking men so that a feeling of security and oblivion of eternal things overcomes them like sleep. Out of this arises either

contempt for the heavenly kingdom or despair. God will not forsake his chosen people, he loves those who are vigilant and alert, but in such a way that while they do everything that can be done through human endeavour, they pray nevertheless, knowing that the beginning, the progress, and the consummation of eternal bliss is a divine gift. Be watchful, therefore, as if God had deserted you for a time, pray as if whatever you attempt were in vain without him.'

To fasten this doctrine more firmly in the hearts of his disciples, the Lord added a fitting parable: 'When I leave you, behave like faithful and prudent servants to whom the master, about to set out on a journey, has given authority to administer his estate, giving to each man his own task and office. And to the watchman he gave the command to watch against the thief at night. Since the servants are uncertain when the master will return, they strive always to fulfil their duty so that whenever the master happens to return he will find them watchful. And it is more certain that I shall return to you than that the master will return to them. For in his case something could happen so that he dies abroad. But my return is more certain than certainty itself, even though the day is uncertain for you. Therefore act like good servants. Always be watchful, expecting my return, for you do not know when the Lord will come – late in the day,[18] or in the dead of night, or at cock-crow, or at dawn – lest, when he comes unexpectedly, upon his arrival he find you sleeping and neglectful of your duty.

'What I am saying to you, I am saying through you to all who are to be born until the end of the world: be watchful. Each man must do the task which has been entrusted to him by the Lord, but the watchman in particular must be on guard, for he watches out for the whole household. For even if the people are asleep, the shepherd must not sleep. As for the rest, this whole life, which does not make a clear distinction between good and evil, in which there is a great deal of ignorance and very little light, is like night when compared to the future life. Although at the end of the world the Lord will appear one day for all men, yet he will come to each individually at the time of his death. For this day, then, which is also uncertain, each man must look out in his private life. For some it comes late in the day, that is, in adolescence, for some in the dead of night, that is, in the flower of their age,[19] for others at cock-crow, that is, in old age.[20] One cannot trust either strength or youth. The hour of death is uncertain to all men alike.

Chapter 14

Now that most holy day of Passover approached – Passover, that is, *Phase*,[1] which in Hebrew means 'a passing,' on which the sacred blood of an

immaculate lamb was to deliver us from the vengeful, slaying sword and to bring those who had been led out of Egypt through the Red Sea and the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Jerusalem, the land flowing with milk and honey. For Passover, which the Jews celebrated annually with great religious zeal, was nothing but a foreshadowing of this victim.[2] The Jewish practice of abstaining from leavened bread during those days also exhorts us to practice the sincerity of the pure gospel.[3] In two days' time was to be the day they called *Parasceve*.[4] Yet how impiously did the foremost among the priests and the scribes hasten in their ignorance to sacrifice that true lamb denoted by the solemn sacrifice observed for so many centuries, while preparing themselves piously for the celebration of the Passover[5] in the corporeal sense. For they had now formed a definite plan to kill Jesus, but, fearing the people, they did not dare to go about it openly and therefore decided to seize and kill him in a deceitful manner. That day was most suitable for their plan on which the reality of the New Testament corresponded to the figurative rite of the Old Testament. They had not chosen this day, it was destined for this victim by the eternal decree of the Father. Conferring among themselves and plotting the death of Jesus, they said: 'Not on a feast day, lest there be an uprising among the people.' For this indeed is Jewish piety: to fear men while not fearing God. But Jesus knew that the time had come when the Father had decreed that the eternal sacrifice should take place and did not leave Jerusalem lest he be absent from the predestined place.

When he had dinner with his dear friends in Bethany, in the house of Simon whose surname was 'the Leper,' Lazarus was one of the guests.[6] You see in this house the peaceful and amiable fellowship of the church, which Christ had purged of its impurities with his blood and which he had brought back to life by his death when it was dead on account of its sins. With such men Jesus liked to share a table rather than with priests and Pharisees who consider themselves pure and alive but in their hearts were what Simon and Lazarus had once been.[7]

During the meal a woman came in, carrying an alabaster flask filled with balsam,[8] an exquisite and precious perfume. She broke it and poured it over the head of the Lord as he was reclining at table. Jesus likes to be steeped in such perfume in the spiritual sense, whereas he never takes pleasure in the luxuries of this world. The church lavishes such perfume on her beloved bridegroom.[9] Whatever precious thing she has she does not keep to herself but pours it on the head of Jesus, to whom is owed all glory. The house of the church stands wide open throughout all the world, but the fragrance of this perfume fills the whole house. By this fragrance many are attracted and seek to be admitted into the house where Jesus shares a table with his friends.

There is no lack of people who begrudge Jesus this luxury and criticize him – Jews, that is, who look after their own interests rather than those of Jesus Christ. Thus some of the disciples who still had a taste for carnal pleasure, and especially Judas Iscariot,[10] objected and grumbled indignantly among themselves: 'What good was it to waste such expensive perfume? For it could have been sold for three hundred denarii, and with this money many poor men could have been helped.' They were so upset about the loss of this perfume that they reproached the woman who had been wasteful in a pious sense. For what is spent on Christ's glory is well spent. Indeed, nothing can be less wasted.[11] The synagogue is parsimonious to Christ, generous to itself. The church, on the other hand, does not calculate the value of what she receives from Jesus, but breaking the little flask, heedlessly pours all it has on her bridegroom's head. Jesus was pleased with the poor widow who threw a small coin into the treasury. He was also pleased with the woman who poured out the precious perfume. The widow recognized her poverty and gave all she had; the other woman was already rich by the grace of God and gave to Jesus not only what she had but also sustained the loss of the flask. One spends her livelihood, the other would lose even body and soul – if what is spent on Jesus could be called a loss. Where are they now who grumble against a gracious outpouring of generosity towards the author of grace? He gives generously of his own that the fragrance of his kindness be spread more widely. He demands no reward, he has only one ambition:[12] he wishes his kindness to be acknowledged, not because he stands in need of such praise, but because it pleases him to lavish his wealth on us in this manner.

The Lord defended the pious zeal of the woman against the grumbling disciples – it is enough to please him alone. 'Why,' he said, 'do you trouble the woman? Let her do as she wishes. She has done me a kindness. Since you are hiding your greed behind the excuse of helping the poor,[13] know that what is spent on me is spent on the poor. Those common poor you will always have with you, and you may be generous to them whenever you wish. But you will not always have me to oblige me with such bodily marks of kindness. What was done was a unique act of honour and was not done to serve as an example that many must be refreshed in the carnal sense, but that this kindness be exhibited by all in the spiritual sense. She does not know what she is doing. But in her pious zeal she does what she can. My death is near, and she will then wish to anoint my body for burial. Since it will not be possible then, she has done so in anticipation. She does honour to the living man since she cannot do it to the dead. Furthermore, the piety of this woman whom you are criticizing is so far from going without praise that when my death will be celebrated in the gospel through all regions of the earth, the

memory of this woman, who honoured my death in advance with such a gift, must also be celebrated.' With such words did Jesus Christ check the muttering of his disciples.

But Judas Iscariot, the only one of the twelve who was spending the common funds in bad faith,[14] could not tolerate the loss of the perfume, but left and went to the high priests to betray Jesus to them. For he was well aware that they were plotting to capture Jesus by deceit. When they had heard what he had to say, they were jubilant. They were pleased that the author of the crime was a close associate of Jesus. They agreed on a price. And in this wicked plot there was a mutual trust rarely found in honest dealings. Judas relied on the simple promise of the priests without a written contract or witnesses, without sponsor or guarantor. He pondered in his heart how he could betray Jesus to the priests and scribes according to their own preference, that is, in a convenient place and at a convenient time, so that no tumult would arise. For that condition had been set in the agreement.

While Judas and the priests were plotting to bring about Jesus' ruin, he carried on the business of bringing about man's salvation. The first day of Unleavened Bread had come, when it was customary to sacrifice the paschal lamb. Then his disciples said: 'Where do you wish us to go and prepare the Passover meal?' And Jesus sent out two of his disciples to prepare the meal and said to them: 'Go into the city and on your entry you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into whatever house he enters and say to the master of the house these words in my name: "Our master asks: where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover meal with my disciples?" Without delay he will show you a spacious dining room, furnished and already prepared for the coming meal. There get the Passover meal ready for us.'

Notice the simple obedience of the apostles, which they had also displayed earlier when they were sent out for the young donkey. Notice also that nothing is hidden from the Lord, so that he manifestly knew in advance and willingly suffered everything that he suffered for our sake. Also notice his authority. In the name of the Lord the donkey is released at once; again, in the name of the Lord the dining room is being shown at once, so that it was manifestly in his power to do as he pleased. By one word he could have restrained the priests and Pharisees when they were hatching their cruel plans.[15]

The disciples went away, came into the city, and met the water-carrier. They followed him, entered the house, and explained their errand to the master of the house. Without hesitation he showed them the dining room. There the disciples prepared the Passover meal, that is, the last and mystical supper which would both represent the figure of the old law and set forth in arcane signs the evangelical victim.

In the evening Jesus followed with his twelve disciples, the only men whom as the chosen ones he wished to witness the holy meal. When they had all taken their places and were eating the food, Jesus said: 'Verily I say to you that one of you who is eating with me shall betray me.' When they heard these words, great sorrow overcame eleven of the apostles, for none except Judas had a bad conscience. Yet they did not dare trust in their own weak human nature.[16] Thus, wishing to be freed from this concern through a sign from the Lord they each asked in turn: 'Surely I am not the one?' Nor was Judas, who was conscious of his wickedness, ashamed to ask with the rest: 'Master, surely I am not the one?'

To give his disciples a perfect example of gentleness, Jesus would rather that they felt sorrow for a while than that he betray the traitor, leaving nothing undone to make him repent of his impious plan. Therefore he said: 'It will be one of the twelve who is so close to me that he will dip his hand into the same dish as I.[17] And for doing him this honour, he will repay me with such a reward.'

Judas realized that he was not hidden from the Lord's knowledge and recognized his unprecedented gentleness. Jesus was not willing to hand over to the other disciples the man by whom he would soon be handed over to death in the most perfidious manner, perhaps because they would have risen in anger against him on account of their love for the Lord. O hopeless malice! What rock, what diamond would not have been softened by the great gentleness of the man who could have harmed him with a word? But that gave him even greater courage to commit his crime.[18]

Then the Lord continued with these words: 'But as for me, nothing will happen against my wish, rather as it was predicted by the prophets about the Son of man, so it will come to pass. It will be to the benefit of many men that the Son of man be given over to death, but woe to him through whose malice the Son of man must be betrayed. For he procures something that will benefit the salvation of others but will be his own ruin.' But Judas' intention was not changed either by the great gentleness of the Lord or by fear of the punishment he threatened.[19] Such a bane is love of money.

Immediately afterwards Jesus commended to his disciples the sacred symbol of his death, of the lasting covenant with those who persevere in the evangelical faith. Thus he took bread, and when he had thanked God the Father, broke it and distributed it among them one by one, saying: 'Take it, this is my body.'[20] And in the same manner, taking up the cup, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and all drank from it. Then he said to them: 'This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. I solemnly assure you: Henceforth I shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink that new wine in the kingdom of God.'

When the meal was over and praise was sung to God as was the custom, that same night they left Jerusalem and went to the Mount of Olives. We must always say thanks, we must always sing the praises of God, whether we experience good fortune or are weighed down by adversity.[21]

There Jesus, who was not unaware of the weakness of his disciples, prepared them to bear the imminent storm. 'You will all be shaken on my account tonight,' he said. 'Isaiah has predicted this also: "I shall smite the shepherd," he says, "and disperse his sheep."[22] But do not despair. Just as my death will trouble and disperse you, so my resurrection will comfort you and gather you in one. For I shall come back to life, as I have said, on the third day, and having come back to life I shall precede you to Galilee. There you will see me and lose the sorrow of your heart.' When they heard this, Peter, who did not as yet know himself, answered bravely but boldly: 'Even if all the others are shocked by your death, I at any rate shall not be shaken.' But Jesus wanted to strike that self-confidence from our hearts and said to him: 'Peter, do you deny that that will come to pass which the prophets have predicted and I, whom you ought to believe by now, do not gainsay? You make bold promises, but indeed you will be more shaken than the rest. For verily I say to you: before the cock crows twice this night you will deny me three times.'

Peter's confidence was not shaken by these words; on the contrary he made even firmer and more magnificent promises regarding himself, saying: 'Indeed, even if I must die with you I shall never deny you.' The other disciples, too, followed Peter's lead in speaking, so that they might go wrong in the same manner and be corrected in the same manner, and that they might realize how powerless they were by themselves and that no words coming from Christ's mouth could be vain. On another occasion they had been in agreement with his profession of faith,[23] and the belief of all was praised in the one person of Peter; in this case they all agreed with his bold confidence, and the boldness of all was rebuked in the one person of Peter. Peter was the only one to deny Jesus under oath, but the others would all have done the same, given the opportunity. For they would have denied him, had they not fled. Peter, showing greater fortitude and steadfastness than the rest, incurred a risk. But none of these things were done by the disciples with malice prepense as in the case of Judas, but rather through the weakness of their nature. And even so Jesus used the tenacious malice of Judas for our salvation. In like manner he wished the weakness of the apostles to become manifest in many ways, so as to teach all men through them not to make promises relying on their own strength[24] when they completely depend on the help of heaven in the gathering storm; and heavenly help is all the nearer the less a man trusts in his own strength. The apostles could not yet be

convinced by arguments, but in future the very facts would teach them self-knowledge.

Thus they came to a garden called Gethsemane. This is a valley at the foot of the Mount of Olives. No one can ascend to the cross of Jesus unless he first descends into this valley, unless he abases himself, renouncing all the resources of human pride.[25]

At that time he took along with him three of the apostles, Peter, James, and John, and told the other eight to remain behind. He retreated a little distance to devote himself to prayer. Behold the evangelical weapon against the violence of the persecutors. Jesus had two very different qualities: divine majesty, than which nothing can be more sublime; and human weakness, than which nothing can be more abject. Since he had given these three a taste of his sublime nature, he now wished them to witness his extreme abjectness and humility to teach them in his own person what must be imitated and what hoped for.[26] There was no splendour of the sun on his face here, no robe whiter than snow, no conversation with Moses and Elijah, no Father's voice – but like a man destitute of all help, he began to be shaken by fear and robbed of his senses by anguish. Indeed he was truly man and significantly expressed in himself what happens to men who are nothing but men when such a storm is threatening.

Nor did he hide his anguish from his friends. 'My heart is filled with deathlike sorrow,' he said. He sought solace everywhere and could not find any. This, too, is a kind of solace: to lament one's misfortune among friends, even if they cannot give any help. In this case, then, he commanded them to stay and keep watch.

When he had given them this command he went a little farther away and, as if utterly forsaken and without human solace and plainly abandoned as far as human resources were concerned, he sought refuge in the Father's help, finding no immediate relief from his misfortune even in him. Thus he fell down on the ground, lowered his face to the earth, and begged the Father to let the time of trial pass if it was somehow possible. His physical nature recoiled from suffering and imminent death.

'Abba, Father,' he said, 'you have the power to do all things. Let this cup pass without my drinking it; yet let that come to pass which has been decreed by your will – which wants nothing but what is best – and not what my weak body desires.'

When he had prayed thus, he returned to the three apostles he had left behind and found them already asleep. Now he called on Peter, who so recently had made stout promises:[27] 'Simon,' he said, 'are you sleeping? Were you not able to keep watch with me even for one hour? This hour does not permit carelessness, for he who works our destruction does not sleep.

'Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation; for if it comes upon you unprepared, you run the risk of being overcome. We share the danger. I watch for you, I pray for you[28] – do you likewise watch and pray together with me, that you may be victorious together with me. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Lest the flesh carry the day, the spirit must be strengthened by vigil and prayer.'

When he had said this, Jesus left again and went back whence he had come, and with the same words begged the Father that he might not drink from the cup that was threatening.

Returning to his disciples after a little while, he found them asleep once more. They were sleeping when they saw the vision of his majesty, and Peter did not know what to say. Here, too, at the sight of his weakness, they were sleeping and did not know how to answer Jesus' reproaches.

He returned to his disciples a third time from his prayers, and a third time he found them asleep. They would have perished, and we together with them, had not Jesus watched and prayed for us all. Therefore he woke them up and reproached them – to rebuke in them the carelessness of all: 'Sleep and rest hereafter. You have slept enough now. The events themselves will rouse you, whether you will or not. The eye of the storm has come. Behold the Son of man will soon be betrayed, to be handed over to wicked men. Rise, let us meet them.' For now the Lord Jesus had collected strength of mind from his prayer to face the coming storm of afflictions. And thereafter he gave no sign of fear or distress, but gave us an example of constant forbearance unto death.

No sooner had he spoken these words, when Judas Iscariot appeared, one of the chosen twelve and especially respected among them, bringing with him a numerous troop armed with swords and clubs against the unarmed Jesus. Nor were they without authority. The high priests, the scribes, and the first among the people had sent this band. Behold here, dear reader, the splendid battle between evangelical piety and false religion. Thus we do battle every day, and thus the gospel truth is forever victorious. No one is more apt to be a traitor than he who under the title of professing the gospel truth teaches the things of the flesh. The danger from false doctrine is much greater than from swords and clubs of notoriously wicked soldiers.

But Judas did not trust in his own strength to betray the Lord; he used an armed band with the authority of both powers, spiritual and temporal. And these things were carried out at night, and advantage was also taken of the place. There must be deep darkness where Jesus is bound and captured. This was the power of darkness, and for a time Satan was permitted to appear victorious over Christ. But what can be blinder than trying to snare

with human cunning him from whom nothing is hidden; to attack him with swords and clubs who can do whatever he wishes merely by a word? Judas, however, did not openly show himself the leader of this wicked band but gave them a sign in advance, saying: 'The one whom I kiss is Jesus. Seize him and lead him away, and take care lest he escape.'

The priests had taken care not to pay out the money before Jesus was in their hands. Now Judas began to go some distance ahead of the troop, as if he were engaged in something else, but always within sight of them. Soon, on approaching Jesus, he greeted him with a kiss as was his custom. Nor did Jesus then abandon his gentleness against the traitor. He merely touched his conscience, saying: 'Friend, what have you come for?'[29] He knew that he would not repent, yet he left nothing undone to set him right, teaching us to use the greatest gentleness with sinners, because we do not know whether they will at some time return to their senses. If they come to their senses we have won the salvation of our neighbours; if they do not, our gentleness will not be without its own reward.

A kiss is a sign of mutual love. Love declares that we are the disciples of Jesus. Nothing is therefore more hostile than a deceptive kiss. Such a kiss is given today[30] as well by the false apostles of Jesus who under the pretext of evangelical piety serve their belly, hunt after human glory, and teach a form of Judaism instead of the freedom of the Spirit.

At the sign of the venomous kiss,[31] the soldiers seized Jesus and bound him. The ensuing turmoil kindled the apostles' courage. Now Peter,[32] forgetful of the Lord's prediction, thought the time had come to live up to his bold promises. Drawing his sword, he struck the servant of the high priest, called Malchus, for he was more savage than the rest and was the first to lay hands on Jesus. But Jesus so tempered the blow from Peter's hand that only the right ear was cut off. The most merciful Lord rebuked his disciple and restored the ear[33] on the spot, making good the loss suffered from the wound, which was not at all dangerous. So kind was Jesus to every man that we ought to be ashamed to lust after revenge, not to speak of harming an innocent man.

Moreover, just as Jesus did not wish to be defended in any other way than by the sword of the gospel word, which penetrates into the recesses of the heart, so he wished the armed band to realize that he could not be captured by any force unless he put himself into the hands of his captors willingly and knowingly.[34] Thus he turned to them and said: 'What has made you come out to seek me here in the dead of night with swords and clubs, as if I were a robber likely to defend myself with similar weapons? Every day I was in Jerusalem – not secretly but in open daylight and in a place most frequented by people, namely, the temple, healing the sick and teaching the

truth. I was always unarmed and in the company of a few unarmed disciples. Why did you not seize me there? You could have done so with less trouble, if it had been decreed thus. But this is the time at which, by divine permission, you are allowed to have your will. And a long time ago Scripture, which cannot lie, predicted that it would happen thus.'[35]

When he had spoken thus, they made a concerted attack and seized Jesus. Soon the disciples, fearing for their lives, deserted the Lord one and all and fled in every direction. The weak may flee if they cannot yet bear the trials; yet there comes a time when fleeing means denying. Then you must not flee but meet death voluntarily. Whenever your death is more of a loss than a profit to the gospel, flee and hide; if your death brings more abundant profit and your flight great loss, face the executioner.

There was, however, among the twelve one young man who loved Jesus more than the rest and followed him when they were leading him away bound. His bare body[36] was covered with a single cloth. When they recognized him, they seized him. But he let go of his cloth and escaped their hands, redeeming his life with the loss of a garment. Whoever escapes in this manner, spiritually speaking, has made a blessed escape. For what else is the body but a garment for the soul? Whenever Satan seizes the soul, pay no heed to your cloth and flee.[37]

Now contemplate how evangelical truth is treated after it has been betrayed by its impious disciple. Bound by the violent band of soldiers, he is being brought to the leaders of the two powers, sworn allies in the plot to kill him. First he is being led to the high priest. No one was a deadlier enemy of Jesus than the wicked high priest. Next, in order to give the appearance that the matter was being carried out under higher authority, all the priests, scribes, and elders gathered together. This is the authority of this world plotting against the humble, yet invincible, truth.

Peter had not yet lost his courage, but was following Jesus from afar, now hiding the fact that he was a disciple, soon indeed denying it under oath. For man's fortitude has in itself no other effect than that he sins more notoriously. Thus he entered the courtyard of the high priest and sat there, mingling with the wicked crowd of his servants and warming himself at the fire, to be a spectator of the Lord's forbearance rather than an imitator.

In the mean time those who held first place of honour among the priests – and who surpassed the rest in wickedness in proportion to their authority – and the rest of the council with them were probing for some testimony against Jesus so as to bring death upon him without appearing to be murderers rather than avengers of wronged religion. They thirsted for nothing more than the death of him who freely brought eternal life to all. And no suitable testimony could be found. For Jesus is the only one against

whom man's cunning can devise no testimony. For many had already come forth to provide testimony against Jesus, but it was so frivolous that it did not appear sufficient grounds for condemnation even in the eyes of those who were most unjust, although they had already condemned him among themselves before he was brought to their court.

Finally some came forward who brought a grave indictment against Jesus, saying: 'We have proven evidence. With our own ears we heard him say: I shall destroy this temple made by hand and thereafter within three days I shall build up another not made by hand.' This they wanted to be considered blasphemy against the temple of the Lord.

Not even this testimony appeared suitable enough, though it exaggerated the truth[38] to increase the atrocity of the crime. You might say that there was in this some respect for judgment and that they favoured the accused, but in truth the diligence of the priests had no other object than to avoid any possibility of Jesus' escaping them.

They had no success. To destroy Jesus they needed the high priest. When he saw that the matter was making little progress, he rose before the council and began to address Jesus to seek from his own lips a reason for his conviction.[39] 'Do you hear the accusations they bring against you?' he said. 'Do you have no answer for them?' But Jesus kept silent and did not answer anything. For what good was it to reply to accusations that they themselves considered frivolous? Thus the high priest continued in his quest, asking him: 'Are you that Christ, the Son of God ever to be praised?'

He admitted that he was Jesus, for he could not deny what was beneficial for all to know. But knowing that they would not believe him or at any rate that they would look down on him because of the infirmity of his body, he added these words to strike fear into them: 'You shall see the Son of man,' he said, 'sitting at the right hand of the divine majesty. With great glory and in the company of angels he will come on high in the clouds of heaven.' Jesus was referring to the second coming, when he would return, not a humble man, but in divine majesty, the judge of the living and dead.[40] The impious priests were ignorant of the law, but they could have learnt from the Pharisees that two comings of the Messiah were predicted by the prophets, one despicable and contemptible, the other magnificent and terrible. But they did not take the time to compare Jesus' deeds with the predictions of the prophets. They were after one thing only: Jesus' destruction.

At this point the high priest, veiling his wickedness with the aspect of piety, tore his robes to make the blasphemy more terrible: 'What need is there for further witnesses?' he said. 'You yourselves have heard his manifest blasphemy.' The wicked high priest, eager for his own glory, cannot bear the

proclamation of Christ's glory, thinking that whatever was attributed to Christ would lessen his majesty. Anger had a little while ago moved him to rise from his seat, nevertheless he was at the same time rising up before the Son of God: now he tore his garments in a prophetic gesture, indicating that the carnal priesthood would be abolished now that Jesus the true high priest was reigning. The glory of the synagogue was torn; Christ's cloak remained whole.[41] What is farther removed from blasphemy than to proclaim the glory of the Son of God; than to attest to a future the prophets had predicted? Yet in the eyes of the wicked high priest it was blasphemy that did not need confirmation by testimony. 'What is your verdict?' he asked. All voted unanimously and judged that the deed must be punished by death. A council worthy of such a priest! Now we must consider how evangelical truth is treated in such councils – where an impious priest wished to be taken for God and cannot bear the glory of the Son of God being proclaimed; where the scribes conceal what they have learnt from the prophets; where the leaders of the people plot with the leaders of the temple; where servants and mercenaries are present, disposed to commit any crime in their wickedness.

For as if Jesus had already been condemned by trial, some of them began to spit at him, others to cover his face with a blindfold and to box his ears, asking: 'Prophesy who struck you.' With such mockery they rebuked him because he allowed himself to be considered a prophet. Moreover, the servants of the priests likewise dealt him blows. This was more cruel than death, but it set an example for us. No one has surpassed Jesus in bearing ignominy,[42] although some surpassed him in working miracles.

While these things were happening to Jesus, Peter, the timid spectator, sat downstairs in the courtyard among the followers of the impious high priest. It was appropriate that he was there, since he was meant to deny Jesus. A servant girl of the high priest came to that place and when she caught sight of Peter warming himself with the others by the fire, she looked at him more closely and realized that he looked like one of the disciples. And she said to him: 'You, too, were with Jesus of Nazareth.' Terrified by her words Peter denied it, saying: 'I do not know the man, nor do I know what you are talking about.'

It was appropriate that the man who had made grand promises should be terrified by a little woman and thus all the more recognize his weakness and that thereafter, when he would bravely profess the name of Jesus before officials and kings, he should know that this fortitude was not innate human strength but given by the Holy Spirit.[43] Thus Peter, who was terrified and did not quite trust the place, left the courtyard but nevertheless did not go far from the house of the high priest. While he was tarrying there, a cock

crowed. Peter heard it, yet did not recall what Jesus had said, so great was the fear that possessed him.

Again some servant girl[44] caught sight of him and started to tell the bystanders about him, saying: 'He is one of them.' Again Peter escaped with a lie, denying that he was one of the apostles. And a little while later, the servants who had been present when the servant girl had recognized him themselves had a closer look at his face and dress and began recognizing him, saying: 'You are certainly one of them, for you, too, are from Galilee.' The first informer was a woman. How great was the danger for a disciple of Christ to be recognized in the courtyards of high priests and princes! Unless he utterly denied being a disciple, he was in danger of losing his life. Peter was also in danger because of his idiom.[45] Such courtyards cannot bear a word of sincere truth.

Now, at length, Peter became a true courtier, for he began to deny it on oath, adding curses: he did not know the Jesus they were talking about. And again the cock crowed. And Peter did not return to his senses until Jesus laid eyes on him.[46] Then, finally, he remembered the words Jesus had spoken: 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he left the house of Caiaphas and broke into tears. But he did not resort to the noose like Judas; for he had lapsed through human weakness, not malice, and the Lord allowed him to do so that his lapse might be a lesson to us. But here the shower of tears bursting forth quenched the lightning of God's wrath.[47] But he did not weep until he had left Caiaphas' palace.[48] For there, the worse a man is, the more pleased he is with himself.

Chapter 15

In the house of Caiaphas the whole night[1] was passed plotting Jesus' death and mocking him. In the morning the council was immediately reconvened, and the high priests with the elders and scribes and all the members of the council led Jesus away bound and handed him over to Pilate to be judged, though they themselves had already condemned him in their prejudice. Now the judges turn into accusers.

When Pilate had heard their accusations, he addressed the accused, Jesus: 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus answered: 'You are the one saying so' – tacitly acknowledging that he was the king. These words, however, had no effect on Pilate since there was nothing in Jesus to indicate that he was seeking a worldly kingdom. The high priests, fearing that Jesus would be able to escape, brought a number of different counts of crime against him, hoping that among so many there would at least be one thing to impress a judge who was not utterly unjust.

When Pilate noticed that the matter was a private grievance, he looked for an opportunity to acquit the accused of the charge. Therefore, when he addressed Jesus again and he gave no answer, he said: 'Do you have no answer when there is such great danger to your life? See how many accusations they are levelling against you.' But Jesus gave no answer thereafter, having no wish to escape the judgment, lest the usefulness of his death be curtailed.[2] Also, he knew that the malice of the priests would not rest even if they made no progress through this channel. Thus he wished to die in such a manner that it would be obvious that he was dying willingly.

The judge, however, though pagan, nevertheless recoiled from slaying a man whom he thought innocent and left nothing untried to free him, although he saw that the man himself offered him no supporting evidence on account of which he could be freed. It was the custom among the Jews that one of those who were held on a capital charge – whomsoever the Jewish people asked to be given them – would be dismissed on the feast day of Passover. At the time a certain Barrabas, infamous for his crimes, was being held in bonds; he had incited a riot in the city and had committed murder in the ensuing tumult. Pilate decided to use this occasion to help Jesus.

Thus when the people had gathered together according to the custom to demand that one of the criminals be released in commemoration of their own safe escape from Egypt, Pilate answered thus: 'I have two, Barrabas whom you know, and Jesus whom they call the king of the Jews: Do you want me to release Jesus on your behalf?' Pilate had realized that he would get no aid from the priests. He therefore had recourse to the people, hoping that Jesus would be freed by their favour. And this would have happened had not the indefatigable malice of the priests incited the multitude to demand that Barrabas rather than Jesus should be delivered up to them.

Although things fell out contrary to the expectation of the judge – for he had heard that Jesus was popular with the people – he still continued to help Jesus as best he could. 'What, then,' he said, 'do you want me to do with the king of the Jews?' He expected a milder sentence for him from the people. But the priests in their cunning had kept strict watch. They had poured their own wickedness into the hearts of the multitude. Nowhere has the authority of such priests more effect than in arousing princes and populace against the gospel truth.

And again the people shouted: 'Crucify him!' Of this, too, the priests had persuaded them, so that the most shameful of all deaths might be chosen by which the name of Jesus would become accursed among all Jews; for the law pronounces anyone a cursed man who is crucified.[3] Thus they sought not only to take Jesus' life but also to destroy his honest name, which is an act

more cruel than murder. They could not bear that anyone's name be considered holy, except their own.

Still Pilate did not yield to their fury but resisted: 'I am Caesar's governor, I am not entitled to put a man to death unless he has been duly convicted. What crime has he committed that merits the cross?' But the governor had no success; on the contrary, they shouted even more furiously: 'Crucify him!' Nor was the governor's determination shaken until the accusation of *lèse majesté* was brought up. For it would not have been appropriate for Jesus to be put to death had not the emperor's authority supported the madness of the priests.

When Pilate saw that he was running a risk, from the emperor on the one hand and from the agitated crowd on the other, he agreed to satisfy the implacable hatred of the priests, scribes, elders, and people and, although he knew that Jesus was innocent, pronounced his death sentence. In pronouncing it, however,[4] he acquitted the innocent man of the crime[5] and condemned the priests and the people. For he pronounced innocent the man whom he handed over to them for crucifixion. The evangelical truth will always have such Pilates; if only there did not arise men more wicked than those high priests! Thus condemned, Jesus was first scourged. When this punishment also failed to satisfy the hearts of the Jews,[6] he was handed over to the cohort to be crucified. And it was decided by divine counsel that Jesus, the fount of all glory, should be subjected to all kinds of humiliation by all kinds of people lest we be dismayed by any kind of evil. Judas betrayed him; the priests, scribes, and leaders of the people had plotted against him; the servants had captured him; Caiaphas, the high priest, the source of this whole tragedy, condemned him; the council and its servants mocked him as if he had been condemned; the people clamoured against him with insane cries; the emperor's name added terror; Herod showed contempt; and the emperor's governor pronounced the verdict. And in all of them is Caiaphas; and in Caiaphas is Satan.

It remained for the vulgar cohort of soldiers to play their part. In them, too, was Caiaphas. All ignominy suffered by Jesus, every destructive act – if it be destructive – came from Caiaphas, who carried out a most sacred thing without knowing it. For he presided over the sacrifice without which no man could attain salvation.

After his condemnation the soldiers of Pilate led Jesus into the courtyard of the praetorium.[7] For the Jews who wanted to appear pious did not dare to enter the praetorium of a pagan, so as to remain pure for the celebration of their great Passover. Yet their hearts were right in the middle of the praetorium, in the hands of the soldiers, men naturally inclined towards mischief,[8] whom they had instigated to act. Once Pilate had handed

over Jesus, he did not consider the manner of his death of great importance. This is how Herod[9] respected John's integrity: yielding to a girl's prayers he cut off his head. Pilate's respect was more constant, yet in the end he handed Jesus over to be crucified, lest any teacher of the gospel truth rely on the resources of this world.

To indulge their hearts all the more by humiliating Jesus, the soldiers called together the whole cohort and, to mock him, clothed him in a purple robe to signify royalty and put on his head a crown twisted of thorns in place of a diadem.[10] When he was thus decked out they began to salute him, saying: 'Hail, King of the Jews.' And with the rod that they had given into his hand as a sceptre they struck his head, spat on him, and paid homage to him on bent knees. But Jesus silently surrendered to all contumely, taking upon himself the ignomy we deserve for our sins so as to advance us to his glory.

When they were done with this, they took the purple robe off and dressed him in his own clothes so that he should carry his cross among criminals and be recognized by all. This too had been planned through the malice of the priests so that everyone's heart should be alienated all the more from him.

On the way they met Simon, a man from Cyrene, who was returning from his estate. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus. Although he was well known and wealthy, the soldiers in their insolence forced him against his will to take up Jesus's cross, not that they might spare Jesus, but to hasten the business of killing him to its conclusion. Some are forced by necessity[11] to take up the cross of Jesus. But indeed this is a blest necessity which drives a man to his salvation. The apostles did not use force to bring anyone to Christ, but the soldiers did. The violence of these wicked men brought salvation to many.

They brought Jesus to a place infamous as a place where criminals were executed, called Golgotha in Syriac, which in Latin means *calvariae locus* [skull place]. There they offered him wine mixed with myrrh to drink. For it was the custom to offer wine to those about to die, but Jesus did not accept the offering, which was spoiled by the bitterness of the Jews.[12] For he had already drunk with his disciples and would not drink from the fruit of the vine until he would drink the new wine in the kingdom of God. He hated the bitter wine that the vine of the Jewish synagogue[13] had brought forth for him and that had turned bitter for the Lord and planter, yielding wild instead of mellow grapes. He hated the wine of wicked men and thirsted for another kind of wine, namely the new wine of the evangelical spirit, which he himself poured into his disciples after he had ascended to heaven.[14]

When Jesus had been raised on the cross, the men who had crucified

him divided his garments among themselves, casting lots to see who should get his cloak whole, for it was woven in such a manner that it could not be divided.[15] Look upon Jesus in his poverty, having nothing left now on this earth. He was suspended between heaven and earth. This is how he must be who wishes to do battle with the enemy of man's salvation: naked, unencumbered, on high. When David was about to do battle with Goliath, he threw away the arms of Saul, which were more of a burden than an aid.[16]

It was the third hour when they nailed him to the cross. To the top of the beam was affixed the description of his offence in three languages,[17] Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: King of the Jews. Together with him they crucified two thieves in such a manner that one hung on his right, the other on his left, flanking Jesus on either side. This, too, was planned by the wicked priests to make Jesus' name ignominious. The prophecy of Isaiah had predicted that this would happen: 'He was condemned with the unjust' [53:12].

Even such dire afflictions could not satisfy the hatred of the priests and scribes. For at first the Jews passing by the cross cast insults at him as he was hanging there, and as if to make it a matter of reproach to the vanquished, they wagged their heads, saying to mock him: 'Ha, so you would destroy the temple of God and rebuild it within three days! Now is the time to show us what you can do. Exert that power of yours of which you boasted. Save yourself if you can, and come down from the cross.'

Nor did the high priests address him with gentler words. Together with the scribes they mocked him: 'Others he has saved, himself he cannot save! He bragged that he was Christ, he bragged that he was the king of Israel – if what he promised is true let him now come down from the cross before our eyes, and we shall believe him.' The purpose of the priests' reproaches was to alienate everyone completely from their belief in Jesus. In the same manner martyrs suffering corporal punishments are often insulted today also. In the same manner the gospel truth is insulted by non-believers; sometimes it is under such duress that it appears to be completely subjugated.

This was not the end of the jeers against Jesus. The men who were crucified together with him on the cross cast insults at the innocent victim. Here, too, Jesus lived up to his name and saved one of the thieves.[18]

At the sixth hour darkness fell and covered the whole land. And it lasted until the ninth hour. Then Jesus, deserted of all human solace, called to the Father in a loud voice, reciting from the Psalm the prophecy regarding himself: *'Heloi, Heloi, lama sabachthani!'* – which, translated, means: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' [Ps 22:1]. When some of the bystanders heard this cry, but did not quite understand the Hebrew,[19] they

said: 'He calls Elijah.' There are many men like them today, and there always will be false prophets who interpret Jesus' words no better than those mockers of Christ did.

Thereafter, when he called out a second time 'I am thirsty,' someone ran up with a sponge soaked in vinegar, stuck it on a reed and, reaching it to him, said: 'Now let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down from the cross.' But again Jesus, having tasted the vinegar, did not want to drink. He was thirsting for another wine, which they would not give him, for they refused to believe in the gospel.

When Jesus had fulfilled everything, he uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple, which keeps that which the Jews consider most holy from the sight of the multitude, was torn from top to bottom. The shadows part when the truth comes forth.[20] Nor was there any further need for any priest to enter the shrine now that the victim had been sacrificed which alone sufficed to expiate the sins of the whole world.

At that point a centurion, who stood by as an aid and witness to his death and who had seen many dying by execution, when he saw Jesus (contrary to the usual experience of others) breathing his last immediately after uttering a loud cry, said: 'Truly this man was the Son of God.' Observe the beginning of the gentiles professing the power of Christ.[21] He who professes him to be man and the son of God professes him to be man and God – though the centurion still understood Son of God to mean a man especially dear to God. Consider also that the Saviour is a Saviour everywhere: dying on the cross he saved one of the thieves, in death he moved the centurion to profess the Christian faith.

There were women present, observing from a distance what was done. Among them was Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the Younger and Joses,[22] and Salome. They were with Jesus when he was residing and teaching in Galilee and were serving him at their own expense; and with them were many others who had followed him in the end on his journey to Jerusalem.

When the evening drew near, this being *Parasceve*,[23] so named because it preceded that great Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea arrived, a distinguished decurion, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God.[24] Because he thought well of Jesus, and relying on his own prestige, he dared to approach Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was surprised that Jesus, being a young man, was already dead, for many went on living for two or three days even after their legs had been broken. Therefore he summoned the centurion who had been posted at the cross and inquired from him whether Jesus was already dead. And when he

had ascertained from him that he was already dead, he gave the body to Joseph. For as long as he lived Jesus allowed even impious men to strike him and spit on him. Once dead, he immediately claimed his due respect and did not want to be touched except by upright and pious men; indeed he did not even wish to be looked upon except by the disciples destined for eternal life. Through this simile he teaches us that no one ought to insist on his due respect in this life. Let him have only one concern through honour and dishonour, through glory and ignominy: to conduct the business of the gospel.

After death dignity flourishes. Thus Joseph, gladdened by so precious a gift, bought a shroud, wrapped the body in it, laid the body into a new grave hewn from natural rock,[25] and rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the grave to make it difficult for anyone to steal the body.

As for the rest, two of the women who had seen the Lord's death, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph, followed him to the grave, watching where they put the body to rest, so as to perform the last rites and pay their respects when, according to the custom of that nation, it was lawful to do so.

Chapter 16

Because the Lord was buried on the eve of Preparation Day and observance of the Sabbath forbade work after sunset, they interrupted the preparation of perfumed oils which they had begun[1] and waited until the end of the following day. As soon as the sun had set, when it was once again permissible to do work,[2] Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, having prepared the unguents, came to anoint Jesus. Very early, at dawn, on the first day of the week following the completion of the Sabbath, on the third day after Preparation Day, the pious women came to the tomb, as the sky was turning rosy[3] at sunrise. They were saying to one another: Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? For it was a huge stone, and the women did not have the strength to remove it. They looked around to see if they could get hold of someone whose help they could use for this end. As they were looking around, they saw that the stone had already been removed. Upon entering the vestibule of the tomb they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting at the right side of the tomb. The women stood amazed at this sight, which was joyful and auspicious, but nevertheless sudden and unexpected.

The angel, therefore, reassured them with gentle words: 'You need not be afraid,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid his

body – it is empty now. Since the preparations you have made to honour him are superfluous, why not rather go and announce this to his disciples, who are greatly discouraged by the death of the Lord, and especially to Peter,[4] whose grief is twofold because he thrice denied the Lord – tell them that Jesus will precede them to Galilee and that they should follow him to that place. There you will see him alive whom you lament as dead.'

But the women, bewildered partly by the unexpected joy and partly by the novel sight,[5] ran from the tomb and said not a word there: such great fear had taken hold of them.

As yet Jesus had not appeared to anyone, but after he had risen, on the first morning after the great Sabbath, he appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She immediately announced to the grieving and weeping disciples what she had seen. They did not believe her when she told them that he was alive and that he had appeared to her alive and spoken to her – so completely had they forgotten what he had promised so many times: that he would rise on the third day.

On that same day he appeared to two disciples in the likeness of a stranger and traveller, when they were on their way from Jerusalem to a farmhouse. They finally recognized the Lord and, returning to Jerusalem, announced to the others what they had seen. Their story, too, found no credence with the majority.

Finally when he was about to go to heaven, he appeared to the eleven apostles (for Judas had met his death), as they were reclining at dinner. He rebuked their disbelief and stubbornness since they had not believed those who had seen him after his resurrection. For the sight of death and resurrection was not for everyone's eyes, yet it was sufficient for evangelical faith to have the matter proven once by suitable witnesses. Otherwise how would the gentiles believe what had happened if they were as doubtful about the apostles' report as Thomas[6] and some others[7] among them had been in the beginning?

And Jesus said to them: 'After all these things have finally been proven to you with many and certain proofs and have been found true, go out into the whole world and proclaim this gospel to all nations of the world. For I have died for all, I have risen for all. There is no more need to observe the old ceremonies; no need for victims and burnt offerings to expiate wrongdoings. Whoever believes in the gospel, through which remission of all sins is freely offered through my death to all who believe in me, and whoever, baptized with water, receives the sign of evangelical grace will be saved. But whoever does not believe in the gospel has nothing to rely on: neither observance of the law nor philosophy; he will be condemned. This path of salvation lies open for all; and it is indeed the only path.

'And lest your preaching lack credibility, you will have the added power of miracles, as long as the gospel faith is present and the matter itself demands a miracle. The chief power of the evangelical grace is spiritual, yet if the progress of the gospel requires a miracle, that power, too, will be at hand for the sake of incredulous and weak men. Those who put their faith in me will cast out demons, not in their name, but in mine; they will speak in new tongues. They will drive off snakes; and if they drink poison it will not harm them. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed. Greater is the miracle that takes place in the heart, but it remains hidden. Avarice, desire, ambition, hatred, wrath, and envy are the poisons and diseases of the soul. They will drive them off in my name and will do so forever. But for the sake of weak men and those who have difficulty believing, miracles too will sometimes be worked so that crass men may see that the Spirit within them is more powerful than human strength.'

When the Lord Jesus had told his disciples these and other things, he withdrew to heaven and there sits at the right hand of God the Father.

But the disciples, after receiving the heavenly Spirit, preached, as they had been commanded, not only in Judaea but in all regions. And their cause was successful, although the world resisted, for the Lord Jesus was displaying his power in the apostles through his Spirit; and he was confirming with miracles wrought everywhere what they were promising in words.

Notes

Translator's Note

xi

1 See below chapter 1 n8.
2 The dedicatory epistles are Epp 1255, 1333, and 1381.
3 The intention to write the paraphrase is first expressed in Ep 1381:417 of 23 August 1523; its completion is announced in Ep 1397:12 of 21 November 1523.
4 For details of the publication history see Roger Mynors' essay on 'The Publication of the Latin *Paraphrases*' in CWE 42, especially xxv–xxviii.

xii

5 On the style of the paraphrases see J. Chomarat 'Grammar and Rhetoric in the Paraphrases of the Gospels by Erasmus' *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 1 (1981) 30–68. Style, however, was not Erasmus' first concern; cf LB IX 530B quoted below xiv.
6 LB VI 151–2. Modern scholars share Erasmus' scepticism regarding Jerome's authorship. See M.-J. Lagrange *Evangile selon Saint Marc* (Paris 1929) ix–x.
7 See below chapter 16 n2 n3.
8 See below chapter 1 n79. The *Gloss* (*Glossa ordinaria*) is a medieval compilation of expositions appearing as marginal or interlinear comments on the Vulgate text. The *Catena aurea*, a commentary made up of excerpts from the Fathers and other ancient exegetes, was compiled by Thomas Aquinas.
9 Cf Ep 396:90–4: 'The sum of human learning began to be found only in certain summary compilers and makers of excerpts, whose impudence stood in inverse proportion to their knowledge. And so they easily allowed those classic authors to fall out of use or, what is more like the truth, they deliberately contrived their disappearance.' Cf *Ann* on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*), where he also alleges that the compilers of the *Gloss* suppressed their sources 'to make their collection more valuable. I suspect the same happened to the old sources which we see quoted in the *Catena aurea*.'
10 Eg *Ann* on Acts 1:14 (*cum fratribus eius*) on a quotation from Bede in the *Gloss* which he was unable to find in Bade's edition of Bede.

11 See E. Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations' on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986) 139–46; cf Ep 456:136–140: 'Let those who wish every word that Lyra wrote to be treated as an oracle defend him in the places where I differ from him. For to look in Hugo for passages to criticize I regard as a foolish waste of time; I noted only a few passages that were exceptionally absurd'; also Ep 843:592: '... respect for those to whom respect is due, among whom I do not reckon Lyra or Saint-Cher.'

xiii

12 An example of this 'theological grammar' is Hugh of St Cher [on Mark 11:25–6] 110v:

Your father who is in heaven

God is the father { of all generally through creation / of the just especially through adoption / of Christ singularly through generation

By saying 'father' he strengthens faith, by saying 'your' he heightens charity, by saying 'who is in heaven' he raises up hope.
Cf Erasmus' paraphrase on these verses below 141.

13 For the nature of the *Paraphrases* in general see CWE 42 xi–xix.

14 Cf Ep 49:110–11: 'I would not reprehend anyone for applying Egyptian trimmings, but I am against the appropriation of Egypt in its entirety.'

15 For examples see E. Rummel 'Quoting poetry instead of Scripture...' *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 45 (1983) 503–9.

16 See E. Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations' on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986) 42–52.

17 See below chapter 1 n57, chapter 2 n36, chapter 5 n26, chapter 6 n8 n9, chapter 7 n9 n16, chapter 8 n36.

18 See below chapter 1 n56, chapter 2 n13, chapter 13 n4.

19 See below 88: 'Just as in comedies there is a change of scene so that by comparing and contrasting persons and facts each character may become clearer, so in the business of the gospel ...'; cf 55 below 'From there, as from a stage, he taught the crowd, which was tightly packed on the shore as in an amphitheatre.'

xiv

20 See for example below chapter 2 n33, chapter 8 n27 n28, chapter 9 n29, chapter 14 n29 n33.

21 Cf Ep 792:86–90: 'My paraphrase is praised throughout by everyone. It is something to have produced even one small book that can find favour with critics so prejudiced and hard to please. I only wish I had confined myself to the sort of fields in which there was not a little more fame to be had, and far less work.'

22 Béda first circulated his critical notes in manuscript form, which elicited from Erasmus a defence entitled *Divinationes* (completed February 1526). When Béda's notes appeared in print in May 1526, Erasmus protested to the French Parlement, presenting them with a summary of his defence (*Elenchus*). Béda's book was eventually suppressed, but many copies had been sold in the mean time, and Erasmus continued the polemic by publishing another

defence, *Supputatio,* which appeared together with his earlier defences (Basel 1527). The text of these apologiae is in LB IX 441–702.

23 Though challenged and prodded by Erasmus (cf Ep 1902), the faculty procrastinated, but finally published its censures in 1531. Erasmus replied the following year with his *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (Basel 1532; text in LB IX 813–954).

PARAPHRASE ON MARK

Dedicatory Letter

2

1 Ep 1400

2 Cf Allen Ep 1375 from Francis I: 'Je vous avertys que sy vous voules venyr, que vois seres le byen venu' (lines 8–9).

3 Cf Allen 1345:3, where Erasmus also explains that upheavals (*rerum tumultus*) are keeping him from visiting France. Since the end of 1520 the French king had been engaged in campaigns against the German emperor (cf Ep 1128 n12 and Ep 1319 introduction). Erasmus followed these developments with great concern (cf Ep 1237:27–8, 1238:68–79, 1248:25–30).

4 The dedicatory letters are Epp 1255, 1333, and 1381 respectively.

3

5 For greatness of spirit as a desirable quality in kings see Cicero *De officiis* 1.61–92. Cicero ascribes this quality to Caesar in *Ad familiares* 4.4.4.

4

6 Matt 26:52; John 18:11

7 Rom 13:1–7. Cf the paraphrase of these verses in CWE 42 73–4 and n1 and n2.

5

8 Cf eg Eph 6:13–17; 1 Thess 5:8.

9 Cf eg Isa 44:28; Jer 23:4; Ezek 34:23, 37:24.

10 Eg *Iliad* 1.263

11 Cf Suetonius *Nero* 20–4.

12 The line is quoted by Festus *De verborum significatione* sv *retiarius.*

6

13 Cf Mark 14:3–9.

14 Cf Mark 7:25–30.

15 Cf John 8:3–7.

16 Cf Luke 22:51.

17 Cf Luke 23:12.

18 Cf Luke 23:43.

19 Cf Mark 15:39.

7

20 10.2. This work is a collection of historical writings usually published under Cassiodorus' name.

21 Roman Emperor in the West 393–423

8

22 Ie Thomas Becket (c 1118–70)

23 Becket had received the living of Ortford in c 1143; in 1164 it was proposed that he should cede it temporarily to the king (Henry II) as security for monies to be paid.

24 Erasmus' patron of long standing. Allen (Ep 1400:244n) suggests that Erasmus had learnt the story of Ortford from Warham or someone in his household.

25 She incited her daughter Salome to ask for John's head; cf Matt 14:6–11 and Mark 6:14–29.

9

26 The Salonica incident was the result of the killing by the Thessalonians of the commandant of the town, Butheric, who had refused to release a popular charioteer from prison. To punish the Thessalonians, Theodosius (346–408) ordered a massacre in which thousands were killed indiscriminately.

27 Cf Ambrose Ep 51 (PL 16 1209C–1214B); Paulinus *Vita S. Ambrosii* 24 (PL 14 38A).

28 According to St John Chrysostom, who is evidently Erasmus' source, Babylas, bishop of Antioch in the middle of the third century, barred from his church an unnamed emperor who had treacherously murdered a royal hostage. The emperor thereupon had Babylas imprisoned and executed. Cf Chrysostom *In sanctum Babylam* 6 (PG 50 541).

29 When the emperor Gallus (251–3) had Babylas' remains moved to Daphne, a suburb of Antioch, the nearby oracle of Apollo fell silent. Cf Chrysostom *De S. Hieromartyre Babyla* 2 (PG 50 531) and *In sanctum Babylam* 14 (PG 50 554).

30 *De beneficiis* 7.7.5

31 Cf Plutarch *Moralia* 207D.

32 Ie not beyond the pillars of Hercules, which he had placed in the Strait of Gibraltar to mark the outer limit of voyages. Cf *Adagia* III v 24.

11

33 For a similar statement see Allen Ep 1349:23–4 and Allen Ep 1010 introduction.

34 For the effects of hellebore cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 25.5.21. Hellebore was considered a remedy for mental disease.

35 Cf Matt 26:3–4, 57; John 13:14, 24.

36 Cf Rom 3:3–5.

37 Cf Matt 28:18.

12

38 Probably a reference to the regions lost to Islam

Chapter 1

13

1 As Erasmus explains in his *Supputatio* (LB IX 637), the following prefatory remarks take their cue from the initial word of Mark's gospel, *evangelium*, literally, tidings of joy or happiness (see also below n6). His aim was 'to distinguish Mark's gospel from the gospel of others' (LB IX 637B–C). By 'others' he meant pagan philosophers and Old Testament prophets. His unconventional use of the term *evangelium* in the primary (classical) sense of 'good tidings' rather than the specific sense of 'gospel' it had acquired in the Christian era prompted raised eyebrows. Noël Béda, who examined Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on behalf of the faculty of theology at Paris, objected to Erasmus' usage as inappropriate, but Erasmus insisted that 'the philosophers, too, were promising a kind of happiness and a supreme good' and 'the same things are promised in the Old and the New Testament' (LB IX 637B).

2 Cf Gal 1:12; Radulfus Ardens *Homiliae in epistolas et evangelia dominicalia* 1.2 (PL 155 1672C): 'Hence Paul glories in the fact that he received the gospel not from men or through men but through the revelation of Christ.'

3 This sentence was criticized by Béda (cf *Supputatio* LB IX 637D–638A) and censured by the faculty of theology at Paris: 'This proposition, which suggests that the men of the old law could not avoid sin and were led by their cognizance of the law to despair rather than love, is an insult to the law and to God, the lawgiver' (quoted by Erasmus LB IX 853B). Erasmus defended himself, saying that he was following the example of Paul, 'who was not afraid to use similar expressions' (LB IX 853C). He went on to quote the Pauline Epistles in support of this claim.

14

4 Echoing Heb 1:1–2

5 Cf Rom 8:32.

6 The etymological explanation of *evangelium* at Mark 1:1 is also given in the commentaries of Bede (PL 92 133C), Radulfus Ardens (PL 155 1671D), Lyra (90r), St Cher (91r), and Pseudo-Jerome (PL 30 611 B). The last mentioned is now ascribed to the Carolingian Renaissance scholar Walafrid Strabo; cf PL 30 531–2.

7 In his paraphrase Erasmus adopts the persona of the evangelist. He was sometimes obliged to remind his critics of this; cf below n68 and also chapter 2 n44 n47 n53 n55, etc.

8 Cf Lyra [on Mark 1:1] 90r: 'Mark strives for brevity.' In Erasmus' time the Gospel of Mark was considered an abbreviated version of Matthew's. Cf *Ann* on Matt 3:17 (*et venientem super se*): 'Mark, who abridged the Gospel of Matthew'; similarly on Mark 1:1 (*initium evangelii*).

9 Literally 'point a finger'; cf St Cher [on Mark 1:3] 91r 'pointing a finger at him'; also *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:9] 271:1. The *Catena* on Mark is a florilegium drawing on early patristic sources, notably Origen and Chrysostom. The compilation is most often ascribed to the fifth-century exegete Victor of Antioch.

10 Ie Malachi; in the Froben text of 1524 the prophecy was ascribed to Micah by mistake. The mistake was perpetuated in the editions of 1534 and 1535.

11 Cf St Cher [on Mark 1:40] 93r, quoting in this context Boethius (*Consolatio Philosophiae* 1.4.4): 'If you are awaiting the physician, you must uncover your wound. Wicked men, on the other hand, cover up their wounds and are defensive.'
12 Cf Lyra [on Mark 1:4] 90r: 'John's baptism was not a remission of sins; the purpose of his baptism was a certain promise of true repentance of one's sins.' Similarly Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:4] PL 92 136B–C; Erasmus was at pains to explain that John's appeal was not for an external act of penance but for a change of heart. He considered the Vulgate version, *poenitentiam agite*, 'do penance,' misleading. The changes he introduced in the several editions of his New Testament encountered stiff opposition, however. On this see C.A.L. Jarrott 'Erasmus' Biblical Humanism' *Studies in the Renaissance* 17 (1970) 125–6.

15

13 Cf Matt 3:11, Luke 3:16.
14 John 1:29
15 Cf John 1:7–9.
16 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:4–5] PL 30 612D: 'What is perfected by the bridegroom is begun by the bridegroom's forerunner'; Radulfus Ardens *Homiliae in epistolas et evangelia dominicalia* 1.2 (PL 155 1673A): 'I am not Christ, he said, I am not the bridegroom but the bridegroom's friend'; John 3:29.
17 Reminiscent of Matt 25:6–13
18 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:1] 266:6–7: 'Mark says that John stands at the end of the prophets and the beginning of the gospel'; similarly Euthymius [on Mark 1:1] PG 129 769C. The Erasmian passage was criticized by Béda, who questioned in particular Erasmus' assertion that John had not called for victims and burnt offerings. Erasmus replied: 'Let him show that he did call for them' (LB IX 638E–F).

16

19 Cf Matt 3:7; Luke 3:12, 14.
20 But according to Erasmus *Ann* on Mark 1:4 (*in remissionem peccatorum*) John reversed the pattern by baptizing prior to teaching. As Erasmus explains, 'the Jew is led to knowledge through ceremonies, the Christian learns first.'
21 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:4–5] PL 30 612D: 'when the catechumens, that is, those who have been instructed, make a beginning under the guidance of a priest and are anointed by a bishop.'
22 Cf Jerome *Tractatus in Marci evangelium* (often ascribed to Chrysostom in Erasmus' time, but now claimed for Jerome) 1 [on Mark 1:4] CCL 78 453:62–3: 'John's baptism preceded the baptism of the Saviour.'
23 Cf Mark 7:3–4.
24 Cf St Cher [on Mark 1:5] 91r–91v: '"Jordan" is composed of "Jor," which means "river," and "dan," which means "judgment."'
25 The text of 1524 had *nam*, 'for.' This was corrected to *non*, 'not,' in 1534.
26 Cf Matt 7:1–2.
27 Cf St Cher [on Mark 1:5] 91v: 'because there must be a river of tears in confession.'
28 For saltpetre's effects cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 31.115.
29 A paraphrase of Luke 18:11–12

17

30 Mal 4:5

31 Cf Lyra [on Mark 1:6] 90v: 'because John came in the spirit and capacity of Elijah.'

32 Cf Lev 11.

33 Cf Deut 22:11.

34 Cf Luke 1:15 and 41; cf Radulfus Ardens *Homiliae in epistolas et evangelia dominicalia* 1.2 (PL 155 1675A): 'Dear brothers, if John, who was hallowed in the womb, castigated himself living in such austerity, what ought we wretched sinners to do?'

35 Erasmus uses the same phrase in his paraphrase on Matt 3:1 (LB VII 13A). Cf Lyra [on Mark 1:4] 90v: 'the condition of the place matched his preaching.'

36 Cf John 1:20–21.

37 Cf Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:7] CCL 78 456:181–2: 'I am the servant; he is the source of authority and the master.'

18

38 Cf Euthymius [on Mark 1:24] PG 129 777C: 'He calls him Nazarene because he was brought up in that community.'

39 Cf Isa 14:13–15.

40 Galilee was called 'Galilee of the gentiles' eg in 1 Macc 5:15; cf Matt 4:15 (quoted from Isa 8:23). For the contempt in which Galilee was held see also John 7:52.

41 Cf Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:5–6] CCL 78 453:82–4: 'Rightly he was baptized in the Jordan, observing the commandments of the law; for he was circumcised according to the law and was baptized according to the law.'

42 Erasmus also refers to this list of witnesses in his paraphrase on Matt 3:12 (LB VII 16E).

19

43 Cf Luke 2:12–14.

44 Paraphrasing Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11, 18:14

45 Cf Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:10] PL 92 138D: 'The gate of the heavenly kingdom was opened, which was shut when the sinful first creatures were cast out of paradise'; Similarly *Gloss* [on Matt 3:16] 15r.

46 Cf Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:10] PL 92 139B: 'the dove is a very simple animal and far removed from malice'; similarly Bernard *In Epiphania Domini sermo* 1.7 (PL 183 146C).

47 Cf Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:12] CCL 78 458:250: 'it descends on men, but does not remain with them'; Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:10] PL 92 138C: 'the spirit remains with the Lord; it is different in the chosen ones where it is according to the measure of faith.' Similarly Augustine *De trinitate* 15.26 (PL 42 1094).

48 Cf John 1:32–4.

20

49 Prov 10:1; cf Menander fragment 109: 'No greater joy for a father than to find his sons modest and wise.'

50 This interpretation is also given by Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 1:12 (*expulit*).

51 Similarly Erasmus in his paraphrase on Matt 4:1 (LB VII 18D): 'he taught his champions in what ways he must be overcome.'
52 Similar thoughts are expressed by Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:12–13] PL 92 139D–140A.
53 Cf Eph 1:22–3, 4:15; Col 1:18.

21

54 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:14–15] PL 30 615C: 'As the shadows yield, truth is present.' In *Ann* on Mark 1:15 (*poenitemini*) Erasmus cites Theophylact's interpretation: 'as if he said "the shadows will yield, the light is present."' He uses the same phrase twice in his paraphrase on Matt 3:9 (LB VII 14F) and 4:16 (21A).
55 See above n18.
56 Cf Plato *Timaeus* 49C.
57 Cf Seneca *De ira* 2.15.4; Aristotle *Politics* 4.14.4; Thomas à Kempis *Imitatio Christi* 1.20.2.
58 See above n40.

22

59 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:14–15] PL 30 615C: 'John in the dungeon: the law in Judaea'; Jerome 2 [on Mark 1:14] CCL 78 461:49: 'for the dungeon is the law.'
60 Jerome ibidem 461:54: 'For Galilee in our language means καταϰυλιστή, transmigration.' It is correct to associate Galilee with the Hebrew verb *gilgel*, 'to roll,' but Galilee means 'circle' in the sense of 'area' or 'district' and has nothing to do with transmigration. This information was kindly supplied to me by H.J. de Jonge.
61 The converse idea is expressed in the paraphrase on Matt 4:17 (LB VII 21C): 'There is a class of teachers who prefer benefiting their listeners to vaunting themselves before others.'
62 Cf Matt 5:17, also paraphrased by Bede in this context (1.1 [on Mark 1:16ff] PL 92 141C).
63 This and the previous three sentences contain allusions to Rom 1:19–32, 2:14–29, and 1 Cor 1:20, 3:19. The passage in Erasmus' paraphrase was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 640B–E) and censured by the faculty of theology at Paris: 'This proposition, too, is insulting to the Mosaic law and to God himself, who instituted these kinds of shadows, victims, and ceremonies of the law' (quoted at LB IX 854E). Erasmus defended himself, saying that he was not condemning the law but the hypocrisy of the Jews (855C), and insisted that the term 'hypocrites' was correctly applied to those who 'boasted of their justice when in truth they did not observe the law but had their insides dripping with vices' (854E).

23

64 The words 'among mortals' were added in 1535, perhaps to clarify the sentence, which was criticized by Béda. Cf Erasmus' defence: 'Paul, too, made a distinction between the justice of God and the justice of men' (LB IX 640F).
65 Cf Rom 3:23.

66 Cf *Catena aurea* 1.7 (I 440): 'Because they draw fish, that is, men, into the net of their holy preaching from the depth of the sea, that is, lack of faith, to the light of faith.' Similarly Hilary, quoted by St Cher [on Mark 1:16] 92r: 'their craft projects their task, namely to draw men from this world like fish from the sea to a more sublime place, that is, to the place of their heavenly abode.'

67 Cf Jerome 2 [on Mark 1:17] CCL 78 462:100–1: 'A blessed exchange of fishing: Jesus caught them that they might catch other fishermen.'

24

68 This view was criticized by Béda as 'Lutheran.' Erasmus replied: 'All right then, let him pretend that this is said by myself [the speaker in his paraphrase is Mark] and concerns the decrees of popes and bishops and the teaching of theologians, will it be "Lutheran" to prefer God to them?' (LB IX 641C).

69 Cf 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7.

70 Cf Daniel 9:25–7.

71 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 1:25] PG 123 505A: 'demons must be rejected and must not be heard even when they speak the truth'; similarly Lyra [on Mark 1:25] 92v: 'teaching us not to believe demons even if they speak the truth, for when they find someone who trusts them, they mix lies in with the truth'; similarly Euthymius [on Mark 1:25] PG 129 777D.

72 *Ea*, as in the editions of 1524, 1534, 1535, not *in ea* (LB VII 165C)

25

73 There is one instance of exorcism in the Old Testament (1 Sam 16:14–23), but there it is David, not a prophet, who causes the evil spirit to depart.

74 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:21–32] PL 30 617B 'the fever denotes lack of self control'; similarly Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:29] PL 92 142D; Theophylact [on Mark 1:30] PG 123 505B: 'He suffers from a fever who is irate or cannot control his hand'; Jerome 2 [on Mark 1:30] CCL 78 468:341–2: 'When I am angry, I am "feverish." There are as many "fevers" as there are vices.'

75 Cf *Catena aurea* 1.10 (I 442), citing Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:23ff] (PL 92 142A) for this interpretation: 'the woman who was first seduced must be healed from the fever of carnal desire.'

26

76 Cf Rhabanus Maurus, quoted by St Cher [on Mark 1:30] 92v: 'The mother-in-law is the synagogue.'

77 This passage was criticized by Béda. In reply Erasmus pointed out that the speaker in his paraphrase was Mark, who was asking for prayers on behalf of the Jews. 'What words can be more pious? If this is "Lutheran" let him accuse Mark, who is the speaker' (LB IX 642A).

78 Cf Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:32ff] PL 92 143A: 'The sunset denotes the passion and death.'

79 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 1 [on Mark 1:33–45] PL 30 617D: 'In the moral sense it is the door to the kingdom: penitence conjoined with faith.' In interpreting the sunset as death and the door as baptism Erasmus duplicates the train of thought in the *Catena aurea* (1.11, I 442–3), which also quotes Bede (cf above n78) and Jerome in succession.

80 Cf John 8:12; see also above n15 and below paraphrase on 2:1 and n2.

27

81 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 1:35] PG 123 508B: 'teaching us not to do anything for the sake of ostentation and that we must seek to conceal any good deed'; Euthymius [on Mark 1:35] PG 129 781C: 'teaching us to flee man's praise when we have done something admirable'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:35] 279:28–32.

28

82 Cf Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:40ff] PL 92 144B: 'shame could not repress a confession.'
83 Erasmus employs the same hypothesis in his paraphrase on Matt 8:2 (LB VII 48B).
84 Cf St Cher [on Mark 1:40] 92v: 'Leprosy denotes desire'; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:40] 281:10: 'leprosy, that is, impiety.'
85 Cf Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:40] PL 92 144B: 'had no doubt, but conscious of his impurity, he was not presumptuous.'
86 Cf St Cher [on Mark 1:40] 92v: 'short speech, but great faith.'
87 Cf Lev 13:45–6.
88 Echoing the words of Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:40ff] PL 92 144A; cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:41] 282:3: 'He is master of his own law'; St Cher [on Mark 1:41] 93r: 'it shows that Christ was not subject to the law.'
89 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 1:41] PG 123 509A: 'the Saviour shows us that nothing is impure by nature'; Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:40] PL 92 144C: 'he cannot be polluted who frees others from impurities.'

29

90 Cf Lev 14:1–7: two birds, one of which is killed, the other released
91 For this question and corresponding answer see also Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:45] PL 92 145C–D. For a modern treatment of the problem of the 'Messianic secret' see J.D. Kingsbury *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia 1983) especially chapters 1–3.
92 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 2:13] PG 123 516B: 'the more you shun glory, the more it pursues you'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 1:44] 282:18–19.
93 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 1:45] PG 123 509B: 'though it behoves the recipient of the favour to be grateful and obliging'; similarly Bede 1.1 [on Mark 1:43] PL 92 144D.
94 Cf Catullus 35.12.

Chapter 2

30

1 Cf Erasmus *De contemptu mundi*: 'Just as bodies are followed by their shadows ... so good deeds bring honour spontaneously' (ASD V-1 50:286–8).
2 Cf John 1:9, 8:12, 9:5.

31

3 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 2:11] PG 123 513C: 'For today, also, Christ is in Capernaum, the house of consolation, that is, the church.'

4 Cf Matt 11:12. Cf also *Ann* on Matt 11:12 (*vim patitur*): 'It has not escaped my notice that Jerome, Augustine, and most other exegetes interpret this passage differently, but one might be permitted to disagree occasionally, even with the most authoritative writers.'

5 Cf Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:5] PL 92 147B: 'He was condemned to a loosening of the limbs because of the bonds of his sins.'

6 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 2:5–12] PG 123 513C: 'I am the paralysed man because the powers of my soul are arrested and do not function when I attempt to do good'; Euthymius [on Mark 2:5] PG 129 785B: 'The paralysed man is similar to those who have immobilized the powers of their soul to do virtuous deeds.'

32

7 Isa 43:25; Ps 103:3

8 Cf Heb 5:1–3, 8:3.

33

9 A topic of concern to Erasmus the educator; cf, for example, *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 345; *De ratione studii* CWE 24 666:15–19.

10 Cf Mark 12:12; Luke 20:19, 22:2.

11 Cf Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:6] PL 92 147D: 'He shows himself to be God since he can know the things of the heart'; similarly Theophylact [on Mark 2:8] PG 123 512D: 'The Lord gave another sign also that he was truly God: he knew their hearts.'

34

12 Cf Matt 28:18; John 20:23; Matt 18:18.

35

13 Cf Celsus 3.27: '[Victims of paralysis] are as a rule quickly carried off; some may live a long time, but rarely regain their health. On the whole they drag on a miserable existence.' Celsus, who compiled an encyclopedia in the first century AD, went almost unnoticed during the Middle Ages, but was rediscovered and became a popular author in the Renaissance.

14 Cf Lyra [on Matt 9:12] 32v: 'unable to walk in love, to touch with good works, to taste sweet heaven, to have the sight of divine contemplation.'

15 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 2 [on Mark 2] PL 30 619B–C: 'lying languidly in carnal luxury ... with enervated limbs.'

16 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 2 [on Mark 2] PL 30 619B: 'on account of their [the bearers'] faith'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 2:5] 285:4–5: 'the sins of the paralytic man were dismissed because of the faith of others'; Theophylact [on Mark 2:5] 512B: 'seeing the faith of both the paralytic and his bearers.'

36

17 This sentence was labelled a 'Lutheran assertion' by Béda (cf LB IX 642C).

Erasmus protested that Béda was condemning him without offering reasons: 'And I thought Béda was a rational being; now he condemns me with one bare word, without using reason. Yet he wants to be called a doctor and boasts moreover that the Parisian theologians do not pass judgment without careful deliberation or scriptual testimony and suitable reasons. Nor can I guess what gave Béda offence' (LB IX 642C).

18 Cf Isa 61:3; Heb 1:9.

19 Paraphrasing Ezek 18:32, 33:11

20 Cf Matt 5:17.

21 This was criticized by Béda, who said that it was inconsistent of Erasmus to attribute salvation at one time to faith, at another to despair. Erasmus in turn accused Béda of quibbling. He defended himself saying that by 'salvation' he meant 'first step towards salvation' (cf LB IX 642F–643E).

22 *Adagia* II vii 2

23 *Adagia* I ii 4

24 See above chapter 1 n11.

37

25 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 2:5] PG 123 512B: 'First he dismisses the weak man's sins, then he heals his disease.'

26 Cf Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:9] PL 92 148B: 'Many diseases of the body arise from sins'; similarly Theophylact ibidem: 'For more complicated diseases usually arise from sins'; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 2:5] 285: 13–14: 'The soul suffers illness before the body does.'

27 Cf Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:9] PL 92 148A: 'It belongs to the same power to do away with diseases of both body and soul.'

28 Similarly St Cher [on Mark 2:5] 93r

29 This sentence was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 643E–644A) and censured by the faculty of theology at Paris; cf LB IX 885B: 'If this means ... that good works and satisfaction are not required from us for the remission of sins committed after baptism – it is heresy.' In his reply Erasmus put the quotation into context. He noted that the censure was phrased as a conditional sentence ('if'), adding that 'there would have been no need for hesitation if they had examined the passage or at least read it' (LB IX 886E). He contends that his words do not prevent anyone from doing good works; they have nothing to do with satisfaction, an aspect of the sacrament of penance.

30 Cf Matt 23:63–7.

38

31 Cf St Cher 93v on 'returning home' [on Mark 2:11]: 'that is, consider your weakness and lowliness.'

32 Similarly Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:1] PL 92 146A: 'He imparts the gifts of his heavenly doctrine and of his powers to the crowd, sometimes in the wilderness, at other times in a town or by the sea.'

33 This identification occurs in Matt 9:9, but not in Mark.

34 An autobiographical touch; cf Ep 867, especially Erasmus' encounter with the customs official at Boppard, lines 50–60.

39

35 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 2:12] 287:7–8: 'leaving aside the greater miracle, that is, the remission of sins, they only wonder at that which is apparent, that is, bodily health.' Similarly Petrus Chrysologus *Sermo* 30 (PL 52 284C): 'Dear brothers, the tax collector sitting in the customs house was worse off than the paralytic lying on his bed of whom we spoke earlier on, for he was physically paralysed, the other was mentally paralysed.'

36 An expression used to denote uninvited persons whom an invited guest brought along; cf Horace *Satires* 2.8.22.

40

37 Cf John 1:29, 3:17.

41

38 Cf Isa 61:1–2.

39 Erasmus also makes this point in his paraphrase on Matt 9:15 (LB VII 54F).

40 Cf John 3:28–9; also above chapter 1 n16.

42

41 Cf John 4:32.

42 Cf Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:18] PL 92 151C: 'He who dines on his flesh and blood cannot fast.'

43 This passage was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 644B), but Erasmus staunchly defended it: 'What does Béda want? Does food by itself justify a man? Then Paul is wrong when he says "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink" [Rom 14:17]' (LB IX 644C).

44 This sentence was censured by the faculty of theology at Paris; cf LB IX 832E: 'This proposition, which falsely asserts that fasting is sad ... is erroneous.' Erasmus defended himself, saying that these words, 'which in the paraphrase are put into the mouth of Christ,' are wrongly attributed to himself and unseasonably applied to his own time. Christ's words, he says, refer to the Pharisees' practice of fasting: 'This has no application to the institution of the church, which followed much later' (LB IX 833A).

45 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 2:20–2] PG 123 517C: 'My disciples have not yet been made strong.'

46 Cf Theophylact *ibidem* 517D: 'Because the disciples of Christ are new they cannot serve the old customs and laws.'

47 This passage was criticized by Béda as containing 'Lutheran' views (cf LB IX 644E–645C). In his reply Erasmus insisted that his remarks were orthodox and that Béda's suggestion that he was trying to weaken papal authority by condemning human institutions was slander: 'Luther roundly condemns all human regulations, and among them the established rules of fasting; I – in the person of Mark – prefer the voluntary fasting of Christians to the forced fasting of the Jews' (LB IX 645B).

43

48 See above chapter 1 n18.

49 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 2:22] 291:25–7: 'In time, as their strength grows, they will also fast; and there will be no more need for the rules and old customs you preserve.' The passage in Erasmus' paraphrase was censured by the faculty of theology at Paris; cf LB IX 892B: 'This is false in so far as it suggests that we are made weak and less spiritual by putting our trust in things of this kind as aids to virtue.' Erasmus replied defiantly: 'That those who put their trust in the observation of external things and content themselves with it remain for ever weak is, according to my understanding, very true' (LB IX 892D).

50 Cf Col 2:21.

44

51 1 Sam 21:6; cf Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 2:26 (*sub Abiathar principe sacerdotum*) on the discrepancy of names in Mark and 1 Sam.

52 But cf Mark 12:29–31, where Jesus calls the commandment to love God 'first and foremost.' Cf also Matt 22:38.

53 This sentence was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 645D) and censured by the faculty of theology at Paris; cf LB IX 911D: 'This proposition which suggests that the observance of the Lord's day and other feast days ... be abolished, which Erasmus urges to the grave peril of Christianity, is asserted in an irrational manner.' Erasmus pointed out that in his paraphrase these are not his, but Christ's words, referring to the superstitious observation of the Sabbath by the Jews. Christians must put love before the law. And 'the church will do without feast days more easily than without love' (LB IX 912A).

45

54 Cf Matt 18:11; John 3:17.

55 This passage was labelled 'Lutheran' by Béda (cf LB IX 645D–648D). As on other occasions, Erasmus points out that the words in question 'are spoken by Mark, and Béda twists them around, applying them to this time, as if they were spoken by me' (LB IX 646A).

56 Cf Matt 5:23–4.

57 This sentence was censured by the faculty of theology at Paris (cf LB IX 894E–895C), who interpreted it as a slighting reference to the habit worn by monks. Erasmus' reply: 'Granted that this was indeed an allusion, as they suspect, what harm is done?' (LB IX 895A) Erasmus himself was criticized for not wearing the habit of his order; cf Ep 296: 181–218.

58 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 2:24] 292:14–15: 'The law has no authority over the lawgiver and master.'

59 The word 'Judaic' was added in 1534.

Chapter 3

46

1 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 3:4] 294:9–10: 'for they knew that he would heal him in any case.'

47

2 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 3:4] 294:19–20: 'They continued in their evil ways and increased their wickedness.'

3 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:1] PL 92 155B: 'The man with the withered hand denotes the kind of man who has hardened and is barren of good deeds'; similarly *Gloss* [on Mark 3:1] 95r: 'That man denotes greedy men who want to receive, not give.'

48

4 This sentence was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 648E–F) and censured by the faculty of theology at Paris; cf LB IX 912B– 913A. In reply to the latter Erasmus explains that he is not speaking 'of wicked men whom the church tolerates among good men, because only God knows the hearts of men ... but those who come to the profession of the gospel, which is more perfect and spiritual' (912D). Answering Béda he says: 'Compared with the Pharisaical teaching, Christianity has the perfect religious profession' (648F).

5 Cf John 20:22.

6 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:7–8] PL 92 157B: 'he came to them through faith, having left behind the perfidy of Judaea.'

49

7 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:9–10] PL 92 157C: 'There is a difference between touching and mobbing: he touches him who has faith and love for him in his heart; they mob him who disturb the peace with their carnal thoughts and deeds.'

8 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:9–10] PL 92 157C: 'the little ship is the church.'

9 See previous note. For this image see H. Rahner *Symbole der Kirche* (Salzburg 1964) 475–90.

50

10 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:13] PL 92 158C: 'the height denotes the justice in which they were to be instructed.'

11 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 3 [on Mark 3:13–19] PL 30 620C: 'For in the spiritual sense Christ alone is the mountain.'

12 Cf John 6:44.

13 The correspondence between the two terms cannot be reproduced in English; the Latin for 'personal envoy' (*a latere*) means literally 'at his side.'

14 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 3:19] 297:16–17: 'because their task was to spread in a loud and resounding voice the doctrines of theology all over the world'; similarly Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:17] PL 92 160B, Euthymius [on Mark 3:17] PG 129 792A.

51

15 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 3 [on Mark 3:13–19] PL 30 621A: 'God made the thunder into rain, that it might extinguish by mercy the burning fire of justice.'

16 Cf Mark 1:15, 16:16.

17 The phrase 'called Didymus' is not in Mark but borrowed from John 11:16.

18 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 3 [on Mark 3:13–19] PL 30 622A: 'lest the wise man glory in his wisdom.'

19 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:13] PL 92 158D: 'The people could not at all approach the Lord speaking on the mountain, for they were not yet mentally capable of understanding the mysteries.'
20 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:20] PL 92 162B: 'Oh what a blessed crowd, coming together in such great eagerness to hear the word of God ... oh Lord Jesus, lavish as much grace on the faithful of our times!'
21 Cf Matt 13:55; John 6:42.

52

22 Cf St Cher [on Mark 3:22] 95r: 'This happens today also when parents see one of their children study theology. They say that he is mad and a fool and would rather that he studied a lucrative subject.'
23 Cf Bede.3 [on Mark 3:21] PL 92 162D: 'For there is certainly a great difference between those who are too dull to understand the word of God and those who purposely blaspheme against what they understand.'

53

24 The famous question of sins against the Spirit is briefly discussed by Erasmus in *Ann* on Matt 12:31 (*Spiritus autem blasphemiae*), in which he quotes St Cher's definition (46v): 'a striving and a desire to vituperate the Holy Spirit.'

54

25 For this distinction see also Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:30] PL 92 165A: 'because they act driven by human ignorance rather than diabolical envy.'
26 Literally 'hand to hand'
27 Cf Bede 1.3 [on Mark 3:31–2] PL 92 165D: '[Jesus acted], not from injurious disdain for his brothers, but preferring his spiritual task to carnal kinship'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 3:35] 300:31–301:1: 'showing us that he honours kinship of the soul more than all physical kinship.'

Chapter 4

55

1 Cf Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:1] PL 92 166D: 'leaving the house he began to teach on the seashore, that is, having left the synagogue, he went on to gather through the apostles the multitude of gentile nations.'
2 In the *Catenae graecorum* this image is applied to the apostles' teaching: 'acting at the center of the world's stage' ([on Mark 4:22] 307:26).

56

3 Similarly Pseudo-Jerome 4 [on Mark 4:1–20] PL 30 624A: 'so that those who could not grasp heavenly things could understand what they heard through its similarity with earthly things.'
4 Cf Allen Ep 1062:32 where Erasmus describes scholastic theology as 'a theatrical art rather than one appropriate to true piety' (a remark criticized by Béda and the Paris theologians; cf LB IX 917C).

57

5 Cf Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:11–12] PL 92 169A: 'For those who are on the outside everything is expressed in parables, both the deeds and the words of the Saviour.'

6 Cf Isa 42:20.

7 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 4:34] 311:22: 'to encourage them to inquire.'

59

8 Cf Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:21] PL 92 170D: 'lest anyone obscure knowledge for fear of physical discomfort.'

60

9 Instead of *vere* the text of 1524 had *vitae*, obviously an error. It was corrected in 1534.

10 Borrowed from Matt 25:18

11 This explanation is also given by Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 4:27 (*nocte et die*): 'For he is said to sleep who feels safe and no longer makes an effort.'

12 Paraphrasing Mark 4:27 'and the seed sprouts and grows, he knows not how.' Erasmus (cf *Ann* on Mark 4:27, *et increscat dum nescit ille*) interprets *nescit*, 'he/it knows not,' as referring to the seed: *it* grows 'without knowing,' ie naturally; it was more commonly referred to the sleeper, ie, *'he* knows not' (cf Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:26–9] PL 92 172B: 'and the seed sprouts and grows while he [*ille*] is unaware of it').

13 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 4:25] 309:18–20: 'First the blade sprouts according to the law of nature, growing to maturity in small increments.'

61

14 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 4 [on Mark 4:26–8] PL 30 624D–625A: 'the man's sleep is the death of the Saviour'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 4:26–7] 96v: 'after his sleep, that is , his death.'

15 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 4 [on Mark 4:26–8] PL 30 625A: 'The number of believers goes on growing, in fortune and misfortune'; similarly Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:26–9] PL 92 172B.

16 Cf Acts 1:11; Rev 1:7.

17 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 4 [on Mark 4:29–34] PL 30 625B: 'The sickle is death or judgment.'

18 The notion 'the tares ... fire' is not in Mark, but cf Matt 13:40.

19 Cf Bede 1.4 [on Mark 4:31–2] PL 92 173A: 'Compare this teaching with the dogmas of the philosophers.'

62

20 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 4:28] PG 123 536A: 'We sprout a blade when we show the beginning of something good ... then an ear when we are able to resist temptation ... then a man bears mature grain in the ear of corn when he does perfect works'; similarly Euthymius [on Mark 4:28] PG 129 797A.

21 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 4:34] 312:2–3: 'The question was asked, not because he did not know, but to gain their attention.'

63

22 Cf Pseudo-Jerome *Expositio quatuor evangeliorum* [on Mark 4:38] PL 30 580B: 'Christ sleeping in the boat shows the testing of the faithful in persecutions'; Theophylact [on Mark 4:30–4] PG 123 537B: 'to teach them that trials must be borne.'

23 *Cervical* (the Vulgate translation of Greek τὸ προσκεφάλαιον retained in the paraphrase) is correctly interpreted by Erasmus as *pulvillus*, 'cushion' in *Ann* on Mark 4:38 (*super cervical dormiens*); Theophylact said it was the wooden tiller of the boat ([on Mark 4:38] PG 123 537B).

24 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 4 [on Mark 4:38–40] PL 30 626A: 'he is sleeping in his corporeal death', (quoted in *Catena aurea* 4.5 (I 465) as 'sleeping in the corporeal sense'); similarly the *Gloss* [on Matt 8:24] 31V: 'His sleeping ... showed the reality of his human nature.'

25 *Motu*; LB indicates a variant, *metu*, 'by fear,' but I cannot trace its source. It does not appear in the Froben editions of 1524, 1534, 1535.

26 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 4:37] 313:14–15: 'They did not have proper faith in him.'

27 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 4:37] 313:30: '[he spoke] like the maker to his creature.'

64

28 Cf Matt 8:20; Luke 9:58.

29 Hilary in his commentary on Matt 8:24 (quoted in *Catena aurea* 8.7, I 144): 'He rests because he sleeps in us as we are sleeping.'

30 The same comparison is offered by Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 4:38 (*super cervical dormiens*): 'How dangerously cardinals and popes sleep nowadays on pillows and headrests of this kind!'; also in his paraphrase on Matt 8:24 (LB VII 51A).

Chapter 5

65

1 The same geographical background is given in much the same words by Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:1] PL 92 175D.

2 Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:1] PL 92 176A: 'figuratively, the gentiles'; similarly Pseudo-Jerome [on Mark 5:3] PL 30 626C

3 Similarly Pseudo-Jerome ibidem: 'bound neither by the law of nature nor fear of God or man'; this is an allusion to Rom 1:29–31.

66

4 Cf *Adagia* I iii 82.

5 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:7–8] PL 92 177A: 'He thought it was no small torment to leave off harming the man'; Theophylact [on Mark 5:7] PG 123 540B: 'Demons consider it torment if they are forced to leave a man.'

6 Cf Gregory of Nyssa *In Canticum Canticorum*, in *Opera* ed W. Jaeger (Leiden 1958–) VI 421:8–10, (cited in *Catena aurea* [on Luke] 8.6, II 116): 'Some demons imitate the host on high and the angelic legions.'

67

7 Mark says 'sea' (*mare* in the Vulgate), but Erasmus explains in his *Ann* on Matt 4:15 (*via maris*), that the word *mare* is used loosely of a lake. He himself uses the term *stagnum*, 'pond,' 'swamp,' or more generally, 'water.'

8 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 5:12] PG 123 540D–542A: 'Observe that demons enter men who live like pigs, wallowing in filthy desires.'

9 Cf John 10:11.

10 Cf St Cher [on Mark 5:15] 97v: 'It was earthly fear because they had lost the pigs'; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 5:15] 317:16: 'For they feared that they might suffer a greater loss.'

11 A Dutch proverb. I have found no written source for it, but the action of throwing roses before swine is depicted in a painting entitled 'Proverbs' by P. Brueghel the Younger (1564–1637) in the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (on loan from a private collection).

68

12 Cf Rom 9:18–29.

13 Erasmus draws a similar parallel in his *Parabolae* CWE 23 225:12–14.

69

14 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 5:23] PG 123 541D: 'That man had only partial faith ... He should have said: Say one word.' Cf Erasmus' *Ann* on Mark 5:23 (*ut salva sit et vivat*): 'They attribute to this elder imperfect faith.'

15 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 5:24] 319:5–6: 'not realizing that he was able to raise even the dead girl.'

70

16 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:26] PL 92 180C: 'Think of the physicians as false theologians, or philosophers, or teachers of the law.'

17 *Levior* (LB); ie 'except that poverty is more easily borne than the loss of youth and talent.'

18 Petrus Chrysologus *Sermo* 33 (PL 52 295 A–B) uses similar terminology: 'to steal quietly,' 'to seek gain through theft,' 'a pious theft.'

19 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:30] PL 92 181B: 'that his power ... be revealed ... and when the power of the Father had been revealed and recognized, many would come to be saved'; similarly Lyra [on Mark 5:30] 99r; Jerome 3 [on Mark 5:33] CCL 78 470:7–8: 'He asked so that the woman might confess and God be glorified.'

20 Cf Lyra [on Mark 5:24] 99r: 'They touched him physically; they did not touch him with devotion and faith, as did the woman'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 5:25] 319:21–2.

21 Cf Luke 22:61.

71

22 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:42–3] PL 92 184B: 'A public disgrace needs public remedy, but lesser sins can be purged by lesser and private penance'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 8:33] 103r: The 'moral' sense of Christ raising the three from death is that 'public sinning requires a public remedy. Venial and private sins may be atoned for by a slight and private penance.'

23 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:34] PL 92 182A: 'This is also said today by those who consider the synagogue too hopeless to be restored.'

72

24 Echoing Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:39] PL 92 182C; cf Jerome 3 [on Mark 5:39] CCL 78 472:48: 'To you she is dead, for me she is sleeping.'

25 Cf Petrus Chrysologus *Sermo* 34 (PL 52 298C): 'because God can resurrect a dead man faster than a sound sleeper can be awakened by a man.'

26 Cf Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.38: 'Sleep is the image of death'; similarly Ovid *Amores* 2.9.41; Virgil *Aeneid* 6.278; Homer *Iliad* 16.671.

27 For examples of this international superstition and the practice of setting out food and drink to lure back the soul see J.G. Fraser *The Golden Bough* (London 1957) III-2 43–6.

73

28 This custom is also described in the colloquy *Funus* (C.R. Thompson *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, Chicago 1965, 366), where Erasmus satirizes excessive mourning and elaborate funerals in terms much the same as those used here. The inspiration was Lucian's *De luctu*, which Erasmus translated into Latin.

29 In Rome, celebration of the rites in honour of dead members of the family; the Christian equivalent is All Souls' Day.

30 The Romans had laws against ostentatious funerals, cf the Twelve Tables; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 14.88; Cicero *De legibus* 2.59–60. Moderation in mourning is also praised by Erasmus in his funeral oration for Berta Heyen, where he lists famous men of antiquity who displayed self-discipline in this respect (LB VIII 558C–D).

31 Cf 1 Cor 15:51–2. Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:39] PL 92 182C: 'Hence comes the Christian custom of calling the dead, who without a doubt will be resurrected, "asleep."'

32 The Froben texts of 1524, 1534, and 1535 read *Thabita*; LB has *Thalita*. Cf *Ann* on Mark 5:41 (*Tabitha cumi*): 'The Greek manuscripts have *Thalita* with an "l," not a "b." The spelling *Thabita* is found, for example, in Jerome's book in which he lists Hebrew terms in the gospels'; cf *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* ed P. de Lagarde (CCL 72 139:29). The latter spelling may be due to a confusion with the proper name Tabitha in Acts 9:40.

33 Cf Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:42–3] PL 92 183C: 'lest it appear a deception rather than the truth'; Theophylact [on Mark 5:43] PG 123 545B: 'That the resurrection be more firmly believed'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 5:43] 321:14–17.

74

34 The two miracles involving the young man (cf Luke 6:11–15) and Lazarus (cf John 11:1–43) are also cited by Bede 2.5 [on Mark 5:42–3] PL 92 (184A–B), who explains their significance in similar terms: 'He resurrected the daughter of the elder ... as if vice had entered her heart secretly ... he resurrected the young man ... because he restored his soul repenting of the darkness of its sins ... ; some are buried, so to speak, and decay, becoming accustomed to their sins ... to show us this, he resurrected Lazarus.'

35 An allusion to Acts 4:3, 17–18

Chapter 6

75

1 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 6:1] 321:23–4: 'because they knew his family in the carnal sense, they disparaged him.'
2 Cf *Ann* on Mark 6:3 (*faber filius Mariae*): 'From Matthew we learn that he also practised the craft of his foster father.' Cf Matt 13:53, but more explicitly Mark 6:3.
3 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:3] PL 92 185A–B: 'He showed that he was the son of the craftsman who in the beginning created heaven and earth'; Pseudo-Jerome 6 [on Mark 6:1–3] PL 30 628D: 'in the mystical sense, the son of the craftsman who crafted dawn and sun.' Cf John 1:3.

76

4 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 6:5] PG 123 548A: 'He could not display his powers there, not because he himself was weak, but because they lacked faith'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 6:1] 321:27–8.

77

5 See above 50.
6 Cf *Ann* on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*): 'By speaking in a simple manner he wished to persuade his disciples, who were still unformed, that they must approach the task of preaching without burden and impediment.'

78

7 Cf Seneca *Epistulae morales* 16.7, 17.9.
8 In ancient literature synonymous with cold climate; cf Horace *Odes* 3.24.11: 'the icy Getes'; cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:8–9] PL 92 187C: 'This does not mean that they must be content with a single tunic in the regions of Scythia that are frozen with ice and snow'; similarly Erasmus in his *Ann* on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*): 'I think that Christ would not have been displeased if the apostles had used boots on account of a rough road.'
9 In classical literature a synonym for hostile and dangerous environment; cf Ovid *Metamorphoses* 4.616–20; Horace *Odes* 1.1.10.
10 Similarly in *Ann* on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*): 'Through hyperbole he denoted his great desire to speed the task.'

79

11 Cf *Ann* on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*): 'not the heavy stick which is carried for the purpose of fighting, but that which aids the traveller and relieves him when he is weary.'

80

12 Criticized by Béda; cf LB IX 649A–D. In reply Erasmus strengthened his position, quoting, among other biblical passages, Mark 1:15 and Gal 2:16 in support of his paraphrase.

13 Criticized by Béda; cf LB IX 649D–650C. Erasmus explained that he was emphasizing the humble beginnings of the gospel to make its progress more admirable. 'But Béda is so concerned with the authority and power of men that he would see Christ's glory put in the shade' (650B).
14 4:5
15 Ie in the apostles' time, since the speaker is Mark (cf above chapter 1 n7). Cf Acts 17:31–2 and 26:23–4.
16 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:14] PL 92 188C: 'Behold, they believed that John could rise from the dead, about whom it is written: "he gave no sign"'.

81

17 The background story is also given by Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:17] PL 92 189A–B; in his *Ann* on Mark 6:20 (*Herodes autem metuebat*) Erasmus refers the reader to Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 1:11.
18 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:17] PL 92 189B: 'John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, reproached Herod'; cf also above chapter 1 n21.
19 Cf 1 Kings 21:17–24.
20 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:24] PL 92 190A: 'fearing ... that Herod would repudiate her and dissolve the illegitimate union.'
21 Erasmus expresses the same thought in his paraphrase on Matt 12:15 (LB VII 71F): 'The intention to commit murder was there, and nothing was lacking but a suitable occasion.'
22 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:21] PL 92 189C: 'The king sullied his feast with the unhappy omen of blood'.

82

23 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:26–7] PL 92 190B: 'to become impious on a pious occasion'; Theophylact [on Mark 6:23] PG 123 553A: 'Here he should have committed perjury rather than perpetrating such an abominable deed.'

83

24 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:28] PL 92 190C: 'John was lowered when he was beheaded, the Lord was raised up on the cross.'
25 Cf Col 1:26–8; Rev 1:8, 21:6.
26 The Froben editions of 1524, 1534, and 1535 read 'alone' (*unius*); LB has *illius*, 'his.'
27 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 6:32] PG 123 554C: 'He withdrew into the wilderness that glory might be shunned.'

84

28 Allusion to Matt 11:12; Luke 16:16
29 Cicero *Ad Atticum* 5.10.3
30 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 8.224 and *Adagia* IV viii 86.
31 Similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 6:40] 327:19: 'setting before them food of the spirit.'
32 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 6:35–6] PG 123 556B: 'See how the disciples progress in mercy.'
33 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:37] PL 92 192C: 'suggesting that every day our starving hearts must be fed by them.'

85

34 Cf Matt 13:52.

86

35 The reference to offering him the kingdom is not in Mark, but cf John 6:15.

36 Conversely Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:50–1] PL 92 197D–198A: 'No wonder the storm abated when the Lord stepped into the boat.'

37 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:47–8] PL 92 196B: 'so that the Redeemer sometimes appears to have deserted them for a while'; Theophylact [on Mark 6:48] PG 123 557C: 'He allowed the disciples to be tested so that they might learn patience.'

87

38 Cf Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:48–9] PL 92 197B 'The Catholic faith declares ... that he walked across the water with the weight and ballast of his body.'

39 Similar tropological explanations are given by Bede 2.6 [on Mark 6:48] PL 92 196D–197A.

40 *Plateis*, literally 'streets'; but cf *Ann* on Mark 6:56 (*in plateis*): '*plateis*, that is, *foris*, "in the marketplace."'

88

41 1 Cor 2:6

42 Cf Matt 23:5.

Chapter 7

1 For a similar contrast see Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:1–2] PL 92 198D.

2 Cf Bede ibidem: 'not to seek a cure, but only to provoke a quarrel'; similarly Theophylact [on Mark 7:5] PG 123 560C: 'seeking an occasion to deride him.'

89

3 These and similar references to man-made rules were criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 650D–651D), who suggested that they disparaged church law and smacked of Lutheranism. Erasmus rejected this interpretation of his words and insisted that they were orthodox statements. 'Let him extol human rules as much as he will, but not so as to make them almost equal to God's law, as some people sedulously strive to do.' In his paraphrase on Matt 15:2 (LB VII 87A) Erasmus also elaborates on this topic, which particularly concerned him.

4 Erasmus makes similar remarks regarding the custom of fasting in *De esu carnium* ASD IX-1 46:822–4.

5 Cf Lyra [on Mark 7:4] 102v: 'They wash ... as if to cleanse themselves of some impurity contracted from others'.

90

6 Cf Lyra ibidem: 'on the inside they were full of iniquity and impurity'; Bede

2.7 [on Mark 7:1–2] PL 92 199A: 'they had a conscience sullied with spite'; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 7:5] 334:14–15: 'you leave the inner man uncleansed.'

7 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 7:1–5] PG 123 560C, cited by Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 7:3 (*nisi crebro laverint manus*): 'for it is not written in the law ... but was handed down by their forefathers'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 7:5] 334:19–20; but see also Mark 7:8.

8 Deut 4:2

91

9 Cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.32.63.

10 This argument is also adduced by Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:11–12] PL 92 200A.

11 Similar practices in his own time are condemned by Erasmus in *Ann* on Luke 7:4 (*sollicite*).

12 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:11–12] PL 92 200B: 'accrues to the profit of the priests'; Theophylact [on Mark 7:11] PG 123 561B: '[The Pharisees] devour what is consecrated to God ... they break the law of God for gain.'

92

13 Cf *Adagia* I iv 87.

14 Similarly Theophylact [on Mark 7:14–23] PG 123 563A: 'First he reproaches them ... then he solves the problem.'

15 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 7:22] PG 123 561D: 'The jealous man casts an evil and spell-casting eye on him whom he envies'; similarly *Ann* on Mark 7:22 (*oculus malus*): '[by evil eye] he means the spell-casting, envious, and unjust eye.'

16 Cf Ovid *Remedia amoris* 615; Erasmus *De contemptu* ASD V-1 60:1.

93

17 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 7 [on Mark 7:31] PL 30 633A: 'Tyrus means "narrowness," referring to Judaea.'

18 The woman is not identified as 'Canaanite' in Mark, but cf Matt 15:22.

19 Mark says that she was 'Greek,' and Erasmus comments in *Ann* on Mark 7:25 (*ad pedes eius*): '"Greek" according to Hebrew idiom means a stranger to the Mosaic law. For the Translator [of the Vulgate] often translates Ἕλληνα by "gentile."'

20 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:25–6] PL 92 202A–B: 'Symbolically, this gentile woman ... denotes the church gathered from the gentiles.'

21 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:27–8] PL 92 202D: 'The table is Holy Writ, which supplies us with the bread of life'; cf John 6:35.

94

22 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 7 [on Mark 7:1–30] PL 30 632D: 'Having faith, prudence, and humility, she deserved to obtain what she asked for.'

23 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:25–6] PL 92 202B: 'The church prays for unbelievers, that they be delivered from the deceptions of Satan'; but Erasmus' 'today' supposedly refers to Mark's time.

24 Cf Matt 3:9; Rom 4:16.

25 Béda (cf LB IX 651E–6652B) accused Erasmus of 'detracting from merit' and, in

doing so, of promulgating Lutheran ideas. In that case, Erasmus replied, 'all of the Pauline Epistles must be disparaged, for they speak of nothing but Christ's grace, God's mercy, and distrust in our works.' 'To take by force' is an allusion to Luke 16:16; Matt 11:12.

26 Cf Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 1.333.

27 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:32] PL 92 203C: 'He is deaf and dumb who has neither ears for the word of God nor opens his mouth to speak it.'

28 Cf Rom 10:17.

95

29 Cf Ps 58:4.

30 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 7:32] 338:32: 'He could have accomplished the miracles with a word.'

31 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 7 [on Mark 7:33] PL 30 633B: 'He who deserves to be healed is led away from turbulent thoughts, disorderly acts, and uncomposed speech.'

32 Ex 8.19; cf Luke 11:20.

33 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:33] PL 92 204A: 'The spittle of the Lord denotes the taste of wisdom'; Pseudo-Jerome 7 [on Mark 7:33] PL 30 633C: 'The carnal saliva of the Lord is divine wisdom.'

34 Reminiscent of 1 Cor 1:30

35 Allusion to John 9:6

36 Similarly Theophylact [on Mark 7:34] PG 123 568A: 'touched by mercy for human nature' (also in *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 7:34] 339:16–17)

96

37 Cf Bede 2.7 [on Mark 7:34] PL 92 204C: 'He looked up to heaven to teach us that it is from there that the dumb must seek speech'; similarly Theophylact ibidem.

38 Cf Eph 1:5; Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15, 23.

39 Cf Acts 2:4.

40 Paraphrasing Acts 4:19

Chapter 8

98

1 Cf Mark 7:27.

2 The image of mass being celebrated is also evoked in *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 8:7] 341:18–20. One suspects that Erasmus here abandoned the role of the evangelist and spoke of his own time.

3 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:6] PL 92 206D: 'They are told to settle down on the ground because through Scripture we are told to tread on and push down the desires of the flesh.'

99

4 Bede (2.8 [on Mark 8:7] PL 92 207C) interprets the fish as referring to 'the holy men of that time by whom the Scripture was put together.'

5 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 8:8–9] 569C: 'We must be content to satisfy our needs and not ask for more.'

100

6 Dalmanutha in Mark, Magedan in Matthew; on this discrepancy see Erasmus' *Ann* on Mark 8:10 (*in partes Dalmanutha*).

7 Cf *Ann* on Mark 8:12 (*si dabitur generationi isti signum*): 'the arrogance of the Pharisees, who wished to appear to be in contact with heaven, when they were most wicked.'

8 Ex 16:14; cf John 6:31. Cf also Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:11] PL 92 209A: 'like Moses having manna sent from heaven.'

9 4 Kings 2:11; cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:11] PL 92 208D: 'They wanted him to produce fire from heaven like Elijah.'

101

10 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:11] PL 92 208D–209A: 'as if they could not slander that, saying it came from the occult ... You who slander what you see with your eyes, hold in your hands, understand by use, what will you do with things from heaven?' For the 'prince of the power of the air' see Eph 2:2; for the allusion to 'eyes ... ears ... hands' see 1 John 1:1.

11 Cf Bede ibidem 209A: 'You will say that the magicians in Egypt gave many signs from heaven.' Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 8:11] 342:16–17: 'to stay the sun, to harness the moon, to bring down thunder and lightning, or to change the weather.'

12 The sign of Jonah is not mentioned in Mark, but in Matthew 16:4; St Cher, however, refers to it in his commentary on Mark 8:12 (102v): 'Note however ... that Jonah, freed from the abyss and the jaws of death, gave a sign from the underworld.'

13 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:13–14] PL 92 210A: 'In the mystical sense the one loaf they had with them in the boat denotes the bread of life itself, the Lord, indeed our Redeemer.' See also John 6:35, 41, 48, and 51.

14 Cf Erasmus' *Ann* on Mark 8:15 (*a fermento Herodis*): 'that is, Herodians.'

102

15 Gal 5:9; cf 1 Cor 5:6 and St Cher [on Mark 8:15] 102v.

16 Said of the Sadducees at Mark 12:18

103

17 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:23–5] PL 92 211C: 'He could have healed him with one word, had he wished to, but he wanted to show us the extent of the man's blindness.'

18 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:23] PL 92 211B: 'Let him always follow the lead of his Redeemer, not the example of the crowd.'

19 For the image of the bearded philosopher see Horace *Satires* 1.3.133, 2.3.35; Persius 1.133, 2.28.

20 Similarly Lyra [on Mark 8:25] 104v: 'In such manner Christ cursed the fig tree ... denoting the Jewish priests to be cursed.'

21 Cf Isa 42:3 and Matt 12:20.

104

22 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:26] PL 92 212B 'to turn to one's heart and consider diligently the great gift received'; see also above 37.
23 Reminiscent of Eccl 3:7
24 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 8:29] 345:20: 'He asked knowingly.'

105

25 4:5
26 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:29] PL 92 213A: 'Peter answered in the name of all.'
27 Reference to 'the son of the living God' is not in Mark, but in Matt 16:16.
28 The notions contained in the clauses 'When the Lord ... shake' are not in Mark, but in Matt 16:17–19.

106

29 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:32] PL 92 214A: 'My [Peter's] ears cannot bear that the Son of God must be killed.'
30 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 8:30] 347:9–10 and Theophylact [on Mark 8:33] PG 123 576A: 'They thought it was better not to suffer death at all.'
31 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:33] PL 92 214A: 'The apostles' error arose from pious love.'
32 This is also explained by Theophylact [on Mark 8:33] PG 123 576B; similarly Bede ibidem: 'You deserve to be called "adversary."' By 'Syriac' Erasmus means Aramaic.
33 Cf Matt 10:24.

107

34 This sentence was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 652C–E). Here, as elsewhere, he accused Erasmus of belittling the importance of works. Erasmus denied that his statements contained anything unorthodox and labelled Béda's censure 'a blasphemy.'
35 The reading of the 1524 text is 'eternal life'; the editions of 1534 and 1535 have no modifying adjective. LB gives the reading 'eternal' in a footnote.
36 Kings proverbial for their wealth; cf *Adagia* I iii 67.
37 Cf 2 Kings 14:25: 'exceedingly beautiful like Absalom.'

108

38 Cf Bede 2.8 [on Mark 8:35] PL 92 215B: 'In the time of persecution we must compose our mind, in time of peace ... we must conquer our earthly desires'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 8:34] 103v: 'In times of peace the flesh must be restrained, in times of war one must incur death for one's belief.'

Chapter 9

109

1 In a similar vein Bede 3.8 [on Mark 8:39] PL 92 215D: 'He had to promise them something regarding the present life so that [their beliefs] could ... be corro-

borated in the future'; 216D: 'to warm their hearts by showing them the sweetness of life in heaven.'

2 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 9:2] PG 123 579A and *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 9:2] 352:22: 'because they surpassed the others.'

3 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:2] PL 92 217B–C: 'Those who desire to see the king in his glory must indeed live spiritually in a sublime place'; Jerome 6 [on Mark 9:2] CCL 78 481:136–8: 'who ascends the mountain with Jesus and leaves behind the earth, so to speak, meditating upon what is on high, rising to heavenly things'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 9:3] 353:4–6.

4 Exod 19 and 20:22; 2 Kings 2:11

5 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:3] PL 92 218B: 'Moses and Elijah, that is, the foremost lawgiver and the foremost prophet, appear ... to show that he is the one whom the whole law and all the prophets' oracles have promised'; similarly Jerome 6 [on Mark 9:3] CCL 78 481:164–5; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 9:3] 354:10–11.

6 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 9:5] PG 123 581A: 'Peter feared the Lord's crucifixion.'

110

7 Cf St Cher [on Mark 9:8] 104v: 'They ascend to contemplate and thereafter descend to preach.'

111

8 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:8] PL 92 219D–220A: 'It would not have been credible: the matter being so magnificent; and afterwards the cross following upon such great glory would have offended them'; Theophylact [on Mark 9:9] PG 123 581C: 'lest men be offended when, after hearing such glorious things about Christ, they saw him crucified later on'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 9:8] 104v and *Gloss* [on Mark 9:9] 106v.

9 Mal 4:5

112

10 Isa 40:3; Mal 4:5. Here and in 14:21 the biblical 'as it is written' becomes in paraphrase an allusion to unspecified 'prophecies' of Christ's suffering. Erasmus perhaps had in mind such passages as Ps 22:6–7; Isa 53; Zech 13:7. Cf also the paraphrase on 14:49.

11 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:12] PL 92 220C: 'Elijah had come spiritually and effectively through John'; similarly Theophylact [on Mark 9:12] PG 123 584C; see also above chapter 1 n31.

113

12 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:15–17] PL 92 221C: 'The inability to heal is sometimes not a result of the weakness of the healers but of the faith of those who are to be healed'; Pseudo-Jerome 9 [on Mark 9:15–20] PL 30 637A (cited by St Cher [on Mark 9:26] 105v): 'Unbelief ... was in the way of their salvation'; Theophylact [on Mark 9:18–26] PG 123 585C: 'You were the reason why your son was not healed, for you had no faith.'

13 Cf interlinear *Gloss* [on Mark 9:21] 106r: 'He asked, not because he did not know, but to show the long history of the disease and thereby to make the healing more gratifying.'
14 Cf *Catena aurea* 9.3 (I 499): 'The wording of his request expresses his lack of faith.'

114

15 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:24] PL 92 223A: 'The vice must be exterminated with rebukes and reproaches, but the man must be kindled with love.'
16 Cf Rom 6:10; *Catena aurea* 9.3 (I 500) citing Gregory *Moralia* 10.30.50: 'He appears dead to the world'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 9:26] 105v: 'He is dead to the world.'

115

17 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 9:28] PG 123 588C: 'The disciples feared that perhaps they had lost the favour that the Lord had bestowed on them'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 9:28] 361:6–7.
18 Cf Bede 3.8 [on Mark 9:27–8] PL 92 223C: 'Fasting in the general sense, not only abstaining from food but from all carnal temptations, indeed from all vicious passions.'
19 Cf Mark 14:38; Matt 26:41.
20 *fortuito*, literally 'by chance.' Mark says *παρεπορεύοντο*, 'they passed through.' Erasmus in his *Ann* on Mark 9:29 (*praetergrediebantur Galilaeam*) opines that the 'prefix *para* tells us that they made their way through Galilee secretly, or quickly and hastily, and as if in passing.'

116

21 Cf Bede 3.9 [on Mark 9:31] PL 92 224A–B: 'because they were used to hearing him often speak in figures ... they wanted it to have a figurative meaning.'
22 Cf Mark 8:15.
23 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 9:34] PG 123 589B: 'still only wise in human ways.'
24 Cf Mark 9:2.
25 Cf Bede 3.9 [on Mark 9:32] PL 92 224B: 'because they had seen Peter, John, and James being led separately to the mountain ... and to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven had been promised.'
26 The reference to Peter and the key to the kingdom of heaven is not in Mark, but cf Matt 16:19.

117

27 Cf Isocrates *Nicocles* 60; *Ad Nicoclem* 27. Erasmus translated the latter work in 1516.
28 The text of 1524 and 1535 had *ex me*, 'on me,' erroneously continuing the direct speech.
29 The reference to the seventy designated and sent out afterwards is not in Mark, but cf Luke 10:1.

118

30 Cf Bede 3.9 [on Mark 9:42] PL 92 226D: 'Indeed he calls a needed friend whose

support and help we need every day "our hand"'; Theophylact [on Mark 9:43–5] PG 123 593A: 'however close a friend he is, however closely tied to you by kinship, or however useful, cut him off.'

119

31 For this traditional interpretation of the worm as conscience, see Bede 3.9 [on Mark 9:43] PL 92 227A, Pseudo-Jerome 9 [on Mark 9:43] PL 30 639B, and Erasmus *Ann* on Mark 9:44 (*ubi vermis*) citing Theophylact [on Mark 9:44] PG 123 593A.

32 *Luscus*, which can refer to a variety of defects in eyesight; but cf Erasmus' narrower concept in *Ann* on Mark 9:46 (*luscum*): '*luscus*, that is one-eyed; someone is called *luscus* in Latin, not because he squints or is cross-eyed, but because he is missing one eye.'

120

33 Cf Lev 2:13.

34 For this idea see H. Merki Ὁμοίωσις Θεῷ. *Von der platonischen Angleichung an Gott zur Gottähnlichkeit bei Gregor von Nyssa* (Freiburg 1952) 44–64.

Chapter 10

121

1 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:1] 371:17–18: 'a twofold healing: of the soul – for such was his teaching – and of the body.'

2 The same contrast is found in Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:1–2] PL 92 229C: 'Here the difference between the multitude and the Pharisees must be noted: the former come to be taught ... the latter approach to deceive with testing questions the Saviour and teacher of truth.'

3 *Cornutus*, literally 'horned,' an expression usually applied to two-pronged syllogisms; the word is also used in this context by Bede ibidem and St Cher [on Mark 10:4] 107r, quoting the *Gloss*; Theophylact [on Mark 10:2] PG 123 (596A) calls it 'a double-edged question' (ἐρώτημα ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἔχον κρημνούς).

4 Matt 19:12

5 Cf Bede ibidem: 'The teacher of chastity will be seen to teach contradictory things'; similarly St Cher [on Mark 10:4] 107r, quoting the *Gloss*.

6 Cf Deut 24:1–3.

122

7 2:24, paraphrased in the following paragraph (Mark 10:7)

8 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:3–5] PL 92 230A: 'He would rather condone discord than hatred and murder'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:3] 373: 31–374:6.

123

9 Criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 652 F–653B). Erasmus' reply: 'Where do I reject the Catholic meaning? Because I say she is no wife, that is, not worthy of the name "wife" and of a conjugal life? For that was the meaning of my words, indeed of the phrase "even if she is not divorced."'

10 Cf Mark 9:42.
11 Paraphrasing Matt 21:16

124

12 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:17] 376:16–17 and Theophylact [on Mark 10:17] PG 123 600A: 'because he had approached him as if he were a man.'
13 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 10:18] PG 123 600A: 'teaching him not to flatter his conversation partner'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:17] 376:27.
14 A sentiment often expressed in Erasmus' educational writings; cf *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 326–7.

125

15 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 10:26] PG 123 601B–C: 'It seems to me that they were anxious for all men; for they had now begun to become merciful.'
16 The text of 1524 has the active voice, *iubemus*, which is obviously wrong. The mistake was caught in 1534.

126

17 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:24] PL 92 232C: 'For it can be done, but with very great effort and with the aid of grace.'
18 The question concerning a reward is not in Mark, but cf Matt 19:27. Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:28] PL 92 233C also adds the question suppressed in Mark: 'We have done what you have commanded us to do; what reward will you then give us?'
19 Cf Bede ibidem: 'Peter was a fisherman. He had not been rich but made a living through the work of his hands and his craft.'
20 Cf *Adagia* I ii 15.
21 Cf St Cher [on Mark 10:28] 108r: 'What does he mean by "left everything"? A boat and nets. Why, then, is Peter proud? Gregory says: "He relinquished the will to possess anything"'; Cf Gregory the Great *xl Homiliarum in evangelia libri* 1.5.2 (PL 76 1093 B–C); similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:30] 380:21–22.

127

22 Similarly Lyra [on Mark 10:30] 108v with special reference to members of religious orders: 'Instead of one carnal father or brother whom they have given up they will have many spiritual fathers and brothers and possessions and fields, inasmuch as they will be adequately supported by the possessions and fields of all faithful;' Theophylact [on Mark 10:30] PG 123 604B: 'And Peter, who had left one house behind, afterwards had the houses of all his disciples.'

128

23 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:23] PL 92 232B: 'But there is a big difference between having and loving money.'
24 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:31] PL 92 234B: 'Look at Judas, who turned from an apostle into an apostate.'
25 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:32] PL 92 234C: 'because they remembered him saying that he would suffer much.'

26 Cf Mark 2:23 and Bede 1.2 [on Mark 2:23] PL 92 153C: 'And it is well that the disciples are recorded as having preceded the Lord because the word of the teacher must come first and thus the grace of the heavenly visitation follows and illumines the heart of the listener.'
27 The Froben editions of 1524, 1534, and 1535 have *difficile ... iter*, 'a difficult journey'; LB omits 'journey.'
28 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:32–4] PL 92 234D: 'He disclosed the time of his future suffering to show that he was aware of the future, and he approached the place of his death to show that he was fearless'; Theophylact [on Mark 10:32] PG 123 604D: 'to let them know that he was suffering voluntarily'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:32] 383:14–15.

129

29 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:32] 383:23: 'coming upon it suddenly, they would be disturbed.'
30 Reference to the mother's role is not in Mark, but cf Matthew 20:20 and Bede (3.10, PL 92 235A), Lyra (109r), and Theophylact (PL 123 606B) in their commentaries on Mark 10:35–9.
31 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:35] 384:20–21: 'hence it is clear that they thought of a tangible kingdom.'
32 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:42–4] PL 92 236A: 'Being a humble and kind teacher, he did not accuse them of immoderate desire when they made this request.'

130

33 Cf Acts 10:34; Gal 2:6.
34 Cf Chrysostom quoted by St Cher [on Mark 10:37] 108v: 'What athlete capable of competition makes a pact?' The sentence in Erasmus' paraphrase was criticized by Béda (cf LB IX 653C–E) and censured by the University of Paris (cf LB IX 886D–F). Erasmus insisted that his remarks were orthodox: 'Men who worship God in this spirit [ie, hoping for a material reward] do not worship him as God and do not truly love God as they are told to love him.'
35 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:41] PL 92 236A: 'who did not know their measure and were burning with immoderate desire.'

131

36 Cf Mark 9:35, 10:15.
37 Cf Mark 9:35.

132

38 For Erasmus' explanation cf Pseudo-Jerome 10 [on Mark 10:46] PL 30 642B; Jerome *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* ed P. de Lagarde (CCL 72 137:9); Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:46] PL 92 237A: 'It signifies our failings, our mutability and mortality'; St Cher [on Mark 10:46] 109r: 'Jericho, which means' "moon" and denotes the world.'
39 Erasmus alludes to the interpretation of the Hebrew name Jehoshuah as 'God helps' or 'heals.' Cf Matt 1:21 and Erasmus' annotation on it (*et vocabis nomen eius Jesum*).

40 Cf Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:47–8] PL 92 238C: 'Many speak up against him, first of all the Jews.'

133

41 Similarly Pseudo-Jerome 10 [on Mark 10:49] PL 30 642D: 'We cry out through our faith; we are called through the apostles.'
42 Echoing Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:49] PL 92 238D: 'to be raised from the torpor of vices.'
43 Similarly Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:50] PL 92 239A: He casts off his garment ... who casts off the webs of this world.'

134

44 Similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 10:46] 388:11–12: 'For it was his custom to make the request of those who were to be healed known to all.'
45 This passage echoes Bede 3.10 [on Mark 10:51] PL 92 239B: 'Behold, the blind man did not ask the Lord for gold but for sight ... Let us therefore imitate him of whom we hear that he has been made whole in body and mind ... He put little value on anything apart from sight, for even if the blind man could have had whatever he wanted, he could not see his possession without sight.'
46 Cf Matt 6:7.

Chapter 11

135

1 Similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 11:2] 389:23–5
2 Zech 9:9 is cited by Matt 21:5; John 12:15.

136

3 Cf John 12:32.
4 Cf above chapter 7 n17.
5 For this traditional interpretation see also Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:2–3] PL 92 240C; Pseudo-Jerome 11 [on Mark 11:4] PL 30 643C; Theophylact [on Mark 11:4] PG 123 612A–B; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 11:4] 390:5–7.
6 Cf Bede ibidem: 'the synagogue, which had suffered the yoke of the law.'
7 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:5] PL 92 241A: 'He has many masters because he is not given to one teaching and superstition, but according to the whims of unclean spirits, he is carried to various and diverse errors'; similarly Pseudo-Jerome 11 [on Mark 11:1–4] PL 30 643C: 'tied at the gate with the bonds of their sins'; Lyra [on Mark 11:2] 109v: 'tied down by wicked custom.'
8 *Fabula*, 'play,' 'story.' The word was criticized by Béda as being irreverent in this context; cf LB IX 654A: 'Again Béda builds up a slanderous case against me because of his ignorance of the word. *Fabula* here does not mean "play" in the sense of Greek *drama*, but the transaction of respectable business involving several persons.' Erasmus pointed out that the word could refer to actual as well as fictitious events.
9 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:2–3] PL 92 240C: 'the garments of salvation, by which he warms men spiritually.'

10 Similarly Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:8] PL 92 241D: 'Many strewed their garments in his path ... to provide good examples for those coming after them.'
11 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 11:8] PG 123 611D: 'branches of trees, that is, the lives of saints'; Bede sees the type of the martyrs in those who take off their cloaks and strew them in Jesus' path: 'the holy martyrs who divest themselves of the cloaks of their flesh' (3.11 [on Mark 11:8] PL 92 241C).

137

12 Cf Matt 28:18.
13 Ps 119:4; Heb 5:6
14 The wording of the Apostles' Creed; cf Heb 1:3–6.
15 *Salvifica;* also translated in this manner by Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:8–9] PL 92 242A and Pseudo-Jerome 11 [on Mark 11:8-10] PL 30 644A
16 There is no such 'command' in the New Testament; this seems to be Erasmus' interpretation of Matt 24:1–2 and Luke 21:5–6.

138

17 The notion of stones raising their voices is not in Mark, but cf Luke 19:40.
18 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:10–11] PL 92 242B: 'With hymns worthy of the Son of God and a king they lead him to the royal city.'
19 Cf Luke 21:5–6; Matt 24:1–2.
20 Echoing 1 Peter 2:5
21 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:11] PL 92 244C: 'In this very great city he could find no host, no home.'
22 Cf Jerome *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* ed P. de Lagarde (CCL 72 136:5): 'Jerusalem, vision of peace.'
23 This traditional interpretation of Mark 11:12 is also offered by Pseudo-Jerome 11 (PL 30 644C); Bede 3.11 (PL 92 244C); Theophylact (PG 123 615A); Jerome 8 (CCL 78 488:33–7).
24 Cf Bede ibidem: 'showing the reality of his human nature.'

139

25 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:13–14] PL 92 244D: 'For why did he look for fruit in the fig tree, as if he were hungry, when any man knew that the season had not yet come ... except to frighten the people whom he had taught with his word also by his deed.'
26 The Greek equivalent, ἄτοπος, is used by Theophylact [on Mark 11: 11–14] PG 123 613B.
27 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 11:13] 391:24: 'Christ did not act on account of being hungry but for the sake of the disciples.'
28 For this traditional interpretation of the fig tree as the synagogue see also Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:13–14] PL 92 245A; Theophylact [on Mark 11:13] PG 123 616A: 'The fig tree is the type of the synagogue, which has only leaves, that is, the law ... but bears no fruit'; Jerome 8 [on Mark 11:13] CCL 78 489:50–2: 'That fig tree is the synagogue of the Jews which has only the letter, not the meaning of the Scripture.'

140

29 Similar interpretations of Mark 11:15 are found in Bede (3.11, PL 92 246C): 'And today, who are the sellers of doves in the temple but those in the church

who take money for the laying on of their hands?'; Theophylact (PG 123 616C): [the sellers of doves], that is, bishops selling spiritual goods'; Lyra on money-changers (110V): 'they are the prelates and curates who are more eager to take in money than to save souls'; similarly St Cher (110R); Jerome (9, CCL 78 493:72–5): 'Truly a place of pestilence where doves are being sold, where the grace of the Spirit is being sold. And even today there are many places where doves are being sold.'

141

30 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 11:26] 396:12–13: 'The surprise shows a lack of faith; for this was no great matter for God.'

142

31 Differently Theophylact [on Mark 11:28] PG 123 620C: 'If he had said "by the power of God," they would have turned the people away from him, for they thought he was God.'

143

32 Cf Bede 3.11 [on Mark 11:32] PL 92 249A: 'Thus they saw ... that they would fall into the snare.'

33 Cf Bede ibidem: 'They were afraid that they would be stoned, but even more afraid to confess the truth.'

Chapter 12

1 Cf Erasmus' *Ann* on Mark 12:4 (*in capite vulneraverunt*): '"beat about his head"' to translate [ἐκεφαλαίωσαν] literally'; the Vulgate translated it *vulneraverunt*, 'wounded.'

144

2 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 12 [on Mark 12:1–14] PL 30 646B: 'God's departure is our freedom of choice'; Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:1] PL 92 249D: 'He seems to leave the vineyard so as to leave the keepers of the vineyard free choice of action.'

3 For this conventional interpretation of Mark 12:2 see also Pseudo-Jerome (ibidem); Bede (3.11, PL 92 240B); Theophylact (PG 123 621C); *Gloss* (111V).

4 This traditional interpretation of Mark 12:10, inspired by Eph 2:20–21, is also given in *Ann* on Mark 12:11 (*a Domino factum est istud*), citing Theophylact (PG 123 623B); similarly Bede (3.12, PL 92 251D–252A): 'so that, like a keystone, he join the two in himself and build one community of faithful and one temple out of both nations'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 12:1] 400:2–4.

145

5 Similarly Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:13] PL 92 252D: 'In their contempt and derision Pilate and the Jews were in agreement, as the evangelist Luke attests.'

6 Cf Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:13] PL 92 253A: '[The Pharisees said] that the people of God need not ... submit to human laws.'

7 Cf Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:14] PL 92 253B: 'that they might seize upon him as the author of a rebellion against the Romans'; Theophylact [on Mark

12:13–17] PG 123 624D: 'to accuse him of inciting the people to rebel against Caesar.'

8 Cf Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:16] PL 92 253C: 'rather, he asked [whose image it was] to give a competent answer'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 12:13] 401:12 'to give a suitable reply.'

146

9 Cf Tertullian *De idololatria* 15.3.

10 Similarly Pseudo-Jerome 12 [on Mark 12:14–25] PL 30 647A and Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:17] PL 92 253D

11 The views of the Sadduccees are also explained by Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:18] PL 92 254A; Theophylact [on Mark 12:18] PG 123 625C; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 12:18] 401:26–8.

12 25:5

13 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 12:18] 401:32: 'to ridicule the resurrection.'

14 In his *Ann* on Mark 12:24 (*nonne ideo erratis*) Erasmus also stresses that, unlike the Pharisees who acted out of malice, 'the Sadduccees erred because of their ignorance of Scripture.'

15 Similarly Theophylact [on Mark 12:13–17] PG 123 625D: 'But for God's power this was practically nothing.'

16 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 12:18–27] PG 123 628A: 'Marriage is practised because of men's mortality, so that they be made lasting by a succession of generations.'

147

17 *Cordatum*, the translation for *νουνεχῶς*, adopted by Erasmus instead of the Vulgate's *sapienter*, 'wisely'; cf his *Ann* on Mark 12:34 (*Quod sapienter respondisset*).

148

18 Eg Isa 9:6–7, 11:1; cf Ps 78:70–1, 89:20–1.

149

19 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 12:35–40] PG 123 632B: 'They secretly approach widows who are without protection as if to become their future protectors and patrons.'

20 Similarly Lyra [on Mark 12:41] 112V: 'by the readiness of [the donor's] will and devotion'; *Gloss* [on Mark 12:41] 112V: 'weighing the amount of his devotion rather than his money'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 12:41] 406:77–8.

21 For this interpretation see also Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:43] PL 92 258C.

22 Cf Bede ibidem: 'because her husband, who died for her, is now in the inner chambers of heaven ... as if he lived in a part of another region'; similarly *Gloss* [on Mark 12:42] 112V.

150

23 Cf Luke 18:11; also quoted by Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:44] PL 92 258D

24 Cf Bede 3.12 [on Mark 12:43] PL 92 258B: 'the Jews, proud of the justice of the law'; similarly *Gloss* [on Mark 12:42] 112V.

Chapter 13

151

1 Cf Lyra [on Mark 13:4] 113r: 'because they believed that immediately after the destruction of the temple would come the last judgment'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Matt 24:6] 195:26–7: 'because they thought that immediately after that war in which Jerusalem would be destroyed, would come the end of the world.'
2 Cf Mark 9:2.
3 Cf Matt 6:25, 31–4.
4 A maxim going back to Hippocrates (*Aphorisms* 2.51); cf Galen *Exhortatio ad bonas artes, praesertim medicinam,* which Erasmus translated, ASD I-1 652.

153

5 Cf 9:27, 11:31, 12:11.
6 The text of 1524 has *lecto,* 'bed' – obviously a misprint for *tecto,* 'roof'; cf Erasmus' *Ann* on Matt 24:17 (*in tecto*): 'either the dining room is meant or the roof itself, where the ancients used to walk up and down.' The mistake was corrected in 1534.
7 The reference to the Sabbath is not in Mark, but cf Matt 24:20.
8 Cf Bede 4.13 [on Mark 13:18] PL 92 262C: 'If they wanted to flee it would be a transgression of the law'; St Cher [on Mark 13:18] 114r: 'they were prevented from fleeing by the law, according to which one cannot go further than one mile.'
9 Cf Acts 7:58–60.
10 Cf Bede 4.13 [on Mark 13:9ff] PL 92 260Dff, who also points out that 'these words of the Lord refer partly to the Jewish captivity imposed by the Romans, partly to the day of the judgment' (ibidem 262C); similarly Augustine in Ep 129.25 (PL 33 914); for a discussion of this passage see also Allen Ep 2566:9ff.
11 The reference to 'burdened with a "vessel"' is not in Mark, but cf Luke 17:31, also quoted in this context by Augustine Ep 191.32 (PL 33 917).
12 Cf Bede 4.13 [on Mark 13:15] PL 92 262A: 'let him not fall back on worldly hopes'; Augustine Ep 129.32 (PL 33 917): 'tied to his carnal life, he descends from his spiritual height.'
13 Cf Bede 4.13 [on Mark 13:18] PL 92 262C: 'Our faith and love for Christ grows cold'; Pseudo-Jerome 13 [on Mark 13:1–30] PL 30 651B: 'cold hearts, like winter'; Theophylact [on Mark 13:18] PG 123 640A: 'for we must flee from sin with alacrity, not in a frigid and slow manner – for that is suggested by "flight in winter."'

155

14 The reference to the host of angels is not in Mark, but paraphrases Matt 16:27.
15 Erasmus' language echoes Eph 1:23, 4:15–16, 5:30, and passim.

16 Echoing Rom 8:17
17 Matt 10:16

156

18 *Sero*; cf Erasmus' unusual interpretation in the next paragraph: 'For some it comes late in the day, that is, in adolescence'; he offers no interpretation for 'death at dawn,' a more likely simile for premature death. Cf Theophylact's interpretation of Mark 13:35 (PG 123 644A): 'late ... because he dies in old age, ... dawn, however, is first childhood.'
19 Similarly Theophylact ibidem: 'in the middle of the night, that is, in the midst of life.'
20 See above n18; Theophylact ibidem interprets 'at cock-crow' as 'in the age of reason' ... for the cock is reason waking us from sleep.'

Chapter 14

1 The meaning of the word is also explained by Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:1] PL 92 266D, Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:1] PL 30 652B. *Phase* is a transliteration of Hebrew *Pesach*.

157

2 For this traditional interpretation of Mark 14:1 see also Pseudo-Jerome (ibidem); Bede (ibidem); Theophylact (PG 123 644C); *Catenae graecorum* (417:17); *Gloss* (114V).
3 Cf Erasmus in his *Ann* on Mark 14:1 (*Pascha et Azyma*) and Theophylact [on Mark 14:12] PG 123 648B.
4 Ie 'Preparation Day,' from Greek παρασκευή
5 The contrast between the pious ritual sacrifice and the impious sacrifice of Jesus is also indicated by Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:1–2] PL 92 267C: 'They who ought to have prepared victims for the coming Passover ... met to plot the death of the Lord.'
6 The reference to Lazarus is not in Mark, but cf John 12:2.
7 Ie covered with sores; cf Luke 16:20–31.
8 There was (and is) some discussion among interpreters as to the exact nature of the spice; cf Erasmus in his *Ann* on Mark 14:3 (*Nardi spicati*).
9 For this traditional interpretation see also Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:1–3] PL 30 652D; Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:3] PL 92 268C; Fulgentius *Sermo* 27 (PL 65 894C): 'The woman, Church, comes in haste with the ointment.'

158

10 He is singled out by John (12:4), but not by Mark; cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:4–5] PL 92 268D; Theophylact [on Mark 14:1–5] PG 123 645B.
11 Cf Fulgentius *Sermo* 27 (PL 65 894D): 'There is no loss in such a deed.'
12 Béda questioned the propriety of applying the word 'ambition' to Jesus. Erasmus' reply: 'All I needed was Béda to teach me how to speak Latin! And he considers it fair that, whenever an elegant word he does not know appears in my writings, I should put up with the accusation of heresy and blasphemy' (LB IX 655C).

13 For this motive see also Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:4–6] PL 30 653A; Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:4–5] PL 92 268D.

159

14 There is no hint of this in Mark; Erasmus is interpreting John's words 'because he was a thief' (12:6), as does Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:4–5] PL 92 269A in this context: 'John believed that from his behaviour on this occasion one ought to submit that he had a habit of stealing.'

15 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 14:13] 420:24: 'he could have chosen not to suffer.'

160

16 Cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:19] PL 92 271B: 'They trusted the master more than themselves, fearing their own weakness'; Theophylact [on Mark 14:19] PG 123 649B: 'trusting more in him who knows men's hearts than in themselves.'

17 Ie, 'by these words he indicated the close relationship to which he had admitted him' (Erasmus in *Ann* on Mark 14:20, *qui intingit manum*).

18 Cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:21] PL 92 271C: 'But the patience of the Lord fuelled his impudence.' The sentence in Erasmus' paraphrase was criticized by Béda; cf LB IX 655D. Erasmus replied that this was quibbling. 'Although the meaning is plain, he aims at me the slanderous charge of blasphemy because of the word I use [ie, *animat*, 'gives courage'] ... The theologians do not reject the proposition "God provides an opportunity for sinning," although they deny that he is the cause of sinning.'

19 Cf Bede ibidem: 'He predicted his punishment so that the threatened punishment might change him who was not overcome by shame.' On the prediction of the prophets see above the paraphrase on 9:12–13 and n10.

20 Erasmus follows the Vulgate here in reading *sumite* [take] only, but in the text of his *Novum Instrumentum* of 1516 he added *comedite* [eat], explaining the addition in a note (on Mark 14:22).

161

21 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:26] PG 123 652C: 'And he teaches us not to be sad if misfortunes befall us ... but to give thanks to God'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 14:26] 424:25–7.

22 Actually Zech 13:7 (the mistake is Erasmus', not Mark's)

23 Cf Matt 16:16–17.

24 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:30] PG 123 653A: 'He permitted it lest we have confidence in ourselves'; similarly *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 14:30] 425:17–19, 30–31.

162

25 Similarly Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:32] PL 92 275A: 'It suggests humility to us ... lest a man dare to boast of his merits after the example of the proud Pharisee.'

26 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:33] PG 123 653C: 'that the very men who had seen his glory would also see his sorrow and thereby learn that he was truly man and was sad and anxious just as we are'; similarly Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:36] PL 92 276C; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 14:33] 426:22.

27 Cf *Catenae graecorum* ibidem 426:28–9: 'He reproached Peter, alluding to what he had said.'

163

28 Cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:39–40] PL 42 277C: 'Alone he prays for all, alone he suffers for all.'

164

29 The words 'Friend ... for?' are not in Mark, but in Matt 26:50.
30 Ie in Mark's time, but this is a typical Erasmian concern; cf Epp 447:49–50, 858:586–600; *De contemptu mundi* ASD V-1 84:189–200.
31 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:38–49] PL 30 657B: 'a kiss poisoned with deceit.'
32 Neither Malchus nor Peter are named in Mark, but in John 18:10; cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:47] PG 123 657A: 'Mark does not mention his name.'
33 Not in Mark, but in Luke 22:51; cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:47] PL 92 278B.
34 The point is also made in this context by Lyra [on Mark 14:1] 114V: 'with his foresight and will.'

165

35 For the allusion to the prophets see above the paraphrase on 9:12–13 and n10.
36 'Otherwise (*alioqui*) bare body' in an unidentified edition pointed out by LB in a footnote
37 Similarly Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:51–2] PL 92 279B: 'whatever they appear to have in this world, they let go'; Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:51–6] PL 30 657D: 'abandon spiritually whatever is of this world.'

166

38 Mark says that they bore false witness, and Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:57–8] PL 92 280C comments in the same vein as Erasmus: 'False in what sense? They add and change a few words, making it appear to be a just accusation.'
39 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:60] PG 123 660A: 'to catch him out by his defence or reply.'
40 Acts 10:42; cf 1 Peter 4:5; 2 Tim 4:1; and the Apostles' Creed.

167

41 The reference to tearing the garment is not in Mark, but cf John 19:24. Cf also Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:63–5] PL 30 658D: 'The pagan soldiers did not rend Christ's cloak: the priest, however, rent the dignity of his own priesthood'; Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:63–4] PL 92 281B: 'The high priest of the Jews rent his own garments while the cloak of the Lord ... could not be rent.'
42 Cf *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 14:65] 431:23–4: 'displaying for us in himself the type of perfect forbearance.'
43 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 14 [on Mark 14:66–72] PL 30 659C: 'Without the Spirit Peter yielded to the voice of a servant girl, with the Spirit he did not yield to princes and kings.'

168

44 Mark says 'the same servant girl,' Matthew 26:71 and Luke 22:58 speak of

another servant girl, John 18:25 speaks of a male servant; cf Theophylact [on Mark 14:66–72] PG 123 661C.

45 Cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:70] PL 92 282D: 'because each province and region has its own idiom'; similarly Lyra [on Mark 14:70] 117V.

46 The reference to Jesus is not in Mark, but cf Luke 22:61.

47 Similarly Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:51–2] PL 92 279B: 'He washed away the sin of denial with the tears of penitence.'

48 Cf Bede 4.14 [on Mark 14:72] PL 92 283B: 'Nor could he do penance as long as he was held back in the courtyard of Caiaphas.'

Chapter 15

1 This is not explicitly stated in Mark, but the point is also made by Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:1] PL 92 283C: 'They kept vigil through the whole night.'

169

2 Cf Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:4–5] PL 92 283D–284A: 'lest, on weakening their case, he be dismissed by the presiding judge and the usefulness of the cross be delayed.'

3 Deut 21:23; cf Gal 3:13.

170

4 *Sed*; an unidentified edition, mentioned in a footnote in LB, had *sic*.

5 Similarly Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:12–14] PL 92 284B: 'Pilate absolved Jesus when he said ["What crime has he committed?"].'

6 Cf Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:15] PL 92 284D who also says that Pilate's motive was 'that they might leave off thirsting for his death and be satisfied with his punishment and disgrace'; Theophylact [on Mark 15:15] PG 123 665A: 'For he wished to satisfy the people, that is, to gratify them as far as possible.'

7 Official residence of the governor in a Roman province

8 Cf Theophylact [on Mark 15:16–21] PG 123 665B: 'The military class always enjoys insults and unruly behaviour, behaving in characteristic fashion.'

171

9 Cf Mark 6:27.

10 Similarly Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:16–18] PL 92 285A; Theophylact [on Mark 15:17] PG 123 665B

11 Cf Pseudo-Jerome 15 [on Mark 15:21–2] PL 30 661B: 'Men forced him to undertake this labour, whom fear or love of God had not induced to do it.'

12 The phrase 'which ... Jews' is not in the 1524 edition; it was added in 1534.

13 Cf Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:36] PL 92 291B on the sponge soaked with vinegar and reached to Jesus on the cross: 'Indeed the Jews themselves were the vinegar; they had degenerated from the wine of the patriarchs and prophets.'

14 Cf Acts 2:1–13.

172

15 The reference to Christ's cloak is absent from Mark's account, but cf John 19:23–4.

16 Cf 1 Sam 17:39.
17 The reference to three languages is not in Mark, but in John 19:20; Pseudo-Jerome 15 [on Mark 15:26] PL 30 662B also makes the point.
18 The reference to Jesus' saving the thieves is not in Mark, but in Luke 23:43. For the meaning of Jesus' name see above chapter 10 n39.
19 Cf Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:35] PL 92 291A: 'not understanding the Hebrew idiom.'

173
20 Similarly Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:38] PL 92 292A; *Catenae graecorum* [on Mark 15:38] 441:15–16
21 Cf Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:39] PL 92 292B: 'The centurion denotes the faith of the church which confirmed Jesus ... while the synagogue kept silent'; similarly Theophylact [on Mark 15:39] PG 123 672D: 'The Jews kill him; the gentile professes him.'
22 The spelling preferred by Erasmus; cf his *Ann* on Mark 15:40 (*Jacobi minoris*); cf, however, verse 47 below, where he uses the Vulgate spelling, 'Joseph.'
23 The meaning is also explained by Bede 4.15 [on Mark 15:42–3] PL 92 293A; cf above chapter 14 n4.
24 *Dei; die,* 'day,' in the edition of 1524 – a misprint corrected in 1534

174
25 *E vivo saxo;* borrowed from Virgil *Aeneid* 1.167

Chapter 16

1 Explained by Luke 24:1, not Mark; cf Bede 4.16 [on Mark 16:1] PL 92 294C–D.
2 Echoing Bede ibidem 294D: 'when it was again permissible to do work'
3 *Albescente coelo,* echoing Bede's *cum iam coelum ... albesceret* (4.16 [on Mark 16:2] PL 92 295A)

175
4 Cf Bede 4.16 [on Mark 16:7] PL 92 296C: Peter was singled out 'that he might not lose hope on account of his denial'; similarly Pseudo-Jerome 16 [on Mark 16:6–7] PL 30 665B: 'Peter, who judged himself unworthy of the apostolate because he had denied the master.'
5 Cf Matt 28:8; Mark interprets their feelings simply as fear; cf Bede 4.16 [on Mark 16:8] PL 92 297B on this discrepancy.
6 John 20:25
7 Luke 24:11

THE SEQUENCE AND DATES OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE PARAPHRASES

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

GENERAL INDEX

INDEX OF THEOLOGICAL TERMS

INDEX OF GREEK AND LATIN WORDS CITED

The indexes refer primarily to the preface, the translator's note, the dedicatory letter, and the notes. An index of all the names and theological terms in the paraphrase itself is beyond the scope of this volume.

THE SEQUENCE AND DATES OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE PARAPHRASES

A **The Epistles**

Romans	November 1517
Corinthians 1 and 2	February 1519
Galatians	May 1519
Timothy 1 and 2, Titus, Philemon	November/December 1519
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians 1 and 2	January/February 1520
Peter 1 and 2, Jude	June/July 1520
James	December 1520
John 1–3, Hebrews	January 1521

B **Gospels and Acts**

Matthew	March 1522
John	February 1523
Luke	August 1523
Mark	December 1523/February 1524
Acts	February 1524

The Epistles were originally published by Dirk Martens in Louvain, except for Timothy, Titus, and Philemon published by Michaël Hillen in Antwerp. The Gospels and Acts were all originally published by Johann Froben in Basel.

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

This list provides bibliographical information for publications referred to in short-title form in introductions and notes. For Erasmus' writings see the short-title list following.

Allen	P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod eds *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and index
Ann	Erasmus *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI
ASD	*Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969–)
Bede	Beda Venerabilis *In Marci evangelium expositio* PL 92 131–302
Catena aurea	Thomas Aquinas *Catena aurea in quattuor evangelia* ed A. Guarienti (Turin 1953) 2 vols
CCL	*Corpus christianorum, series latina* (Turnhout 1953–)
Catenae graecorum	*Catenae graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum* ed J.A. Cramer (Oxford 1844) I
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974–)
Euthymius	*Commentarius in evangelium secundum Marcum* PG 129 765–852
Gloss	*Glossa ordinaria,* in *Biblia sacra* (Lyon 1545) V
Jerome	Eusebius Hieronymus Stridensis *Tractatus in Marci evangelium* ed G. Morin CCL 78 449–500
LB	J. Leclerc ed *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia* (Leiden 1703–6) 10 vols
Lyra	Nicolaus Lyranus *Postilla* (Lyon 1545) V
PG	J.P. Migne ed *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series graeca* (Paris 1857–86) 162 vols
PL	J.P. Migne ed *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series latina* (Paris 1844–66) 221 vols

Pseudo-Jerome	Eusebius Hieronymus Stridensis *Commentarius in evangelium secundum Marcum* PL 30 (1865) 610–67
St Cher	Hugo de Sancto Charo *In evangelia ... opus ... in quo declarantur sensus omnes* (Venice 1732) VI
Theophylact	Theophylactus *Ennaratio in evangelium Marci* PG 123 491–682

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-5, 6 / CWE 30-6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI
Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae ... a Sanctio Caranzam defensam LB IX
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii LB IX
Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX
Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX
Apologia invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula*
Apologiae contra Stunicam: Apologiae contra Lopidem Stunicam LB IX / ASD IX-2
Apophthegmata LB IV
Appendix respondens ad Sutorem LB IX
Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula*

Carmina varia LB VIII
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I
Christiani hominis institutum, carmen LB V
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] *Opuscula*

De bello turcico: Consultatio de bello turcico LB V
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / CWE 25

De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia LB V
De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / CWE 24
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX
De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1
De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 26
De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V
De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24
De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 26
De tedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de tedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu LB V
De vidua christiana LB V / CWE 66
De virtute amplectenda: Oratio de virtute amplectenda LB V
Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV
Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX
Detectio praestigiarum: Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli germanice scripti LB X / ASD IX-1
[Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium: Chonradi Nastadiensis dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium] *Opuscula* / CWE 7
Dilutio: Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii
Divinationes ad notata Bedae LB IX

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi LB V
Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras LB IX
Enchiridion: Enchiridion militis christiani LB V / CWE 66
Encomium matrimonii (in De conscribendis epistolis)
Encomium medicinae: Declamatio in laudem artis medicae LB I / ASD I-4
Epigrammata LB I
Epistola ad Dorpium LB IX / CWE 3
Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae: Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris ad epistolam apologeticam incerto autore proditam LB X
Epistola ad graculos: Epistola ad quosdam imprudentissimos graculos LB X
Epistola apologetica de Termino LB X
Epistola consolatoria: Epistola consolatoria virginibus sacris LB V
Epistola contra pseudevangelicos: Epistola contra quosdam qui se falso iactant evangelicos LB X / ASD IX-1
Epistola de esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium LB IX / ASD IX-1
Exomologesis: Exomologesis sive modus confitendi LB V
Explanatio symboli: Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus LB V / ASD V-1
Expostulatio Iesu LB V

Formula: Conficiendarum epistolarum formula (see De conscribendis epistolis)

Hymni varii LB V
Hyperaspistes LB X

Institutio christiani matrimonii LB V
Institutio principis christiani LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27

[Julius exclusus: Dialogus Julius exclusus e coelis] *Opuscula* / CWE 27

Lingua LB IV / ASD IV-1
Liturgia Virginis Matris: Virginis Matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia LB V / ASD V-1

Methodus (see Ratio)
Modus orandi Deum LB V / ASD V-1
Moria: Moriae encomium LB IV / ASD IV-3 / CWE 27

Novum Testamentum: Novum Testamentum 1519 and later (Novum instrumentum for the first edition, 1516, when required) LB VI

Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam: Obsecratio sive oratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus adversis LB V
Oratio de pace: Oratio de pace et discordia LB VIII
Oratio funebris: Oratio funebris Berthae de Heyen LB VIII

Paean Virgini Matri: Paean Virgini Matri dicendus LB V
Panegyricus: Panegyricus ad Philippum Austriae ducem LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27
Parabolae: Parabolae sive similia LB I / ASD I-5 / CWE 23
Paraclesis LB V, VI
Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae: Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae LB I / ASD I-4
Paraphrasis in Matthaeum, etc (in Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum)
Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum LB VII / CWE 42–50
Peregrinatio apostolorum: Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli LB VI, VII
Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum
Precatio dominica LB V
Precationes LB V
Precatio pro pace ecclesiae: Precatio ad Iesum pro pace ecclesiae LB IV, V
Progymnasmata: Progymnasmata quaedam primae adolescentiae Erasmi LB VIII
Psalmi: Psalmi, or Enarrationes sive commentarii in psalmos LB V / ASD IV-2
Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri: Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Lutheri LB IX

Querela pacis LB IV / ASD IV-2 / CWE 27

Ratio: Ratio seu Methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam (Methodus for the shorter version originally published in the Novum Instrumentum of 1516)
Responsio ad annotationes Lei: Liber quo respondet annotationibus Lei LB IX

Responsio ad collationes: Responsio ad collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali LB IX
Responsio ad disputationem de divortio: Responsio ad disputationem cuiusdam Phimostomi de divortio LB IX
Responsio ad epistolam Pii: Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Alberti Pii, or Responsio ad exhortationem Pii LB IX
Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas LB X
Responsio ad Petri Cursii defensionem: Epistola de apologia Cursii LB X
Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum: Apologia monasticae religionis LB X

Spongia: Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni LB X / ASD IX-1
Supputatio: Supputatio calumniarum Natalis Bedae LB IX

Virginis et martyris comparatio LB V
Vita Hieronymi: Vita divi Hieronymi Stridonensis *Opuscula*

General Index

ablutions, Pharisaical. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Abraham. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Absalom, proverbial for beauty 107
Alexander the Great 9
Ambrose, St 8–9; cited 9 n27
Antichrist 154
apostles. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Aristotle, cited 21 n57
Augustine, cited 19 n47, 153 n10 n11 n12

Babylas, bishop of Antioch 9
baptism. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Becket, Thomas. *See* Thomas Becket
Béda, Noël xiv and n22; his criticism of Erasmus cited: on Erasmus' supposed Lutheranism 23 n64, 24 n68, 26 n77, 36 n17, 42 n47, 45 n55, 89 n3, 94 n25; on importance of works 37 n29, 80 n12, 107 n34; on meaning of terms used by Erasmus 13 n1, 158 n12, 160 n18; on Mosaic law 13 n3, 22 n63; on observance of church regulations 42 n43, 44 n53; on other topics 36 n21, 48 n4, 56 n4, 80 n13, 123 n9, 130 n34, 136 n8
Bede, the Venerable xii; parallels cited 14 n6 n12, 19 n45 n46 n47, 20 n52, 22 n62, 25 n74 n75, 26 n78 n79, 28 n82 n85 n88 n89, 29 n91 n93, 31 n5, 33 n11, 37 n26 n27, 38 n32, 42 n42, 47 n3, 48 n6, 49 n7 n8, 50 n10 n14, 51 n19 n20, 52 n23, 54 n25 n27, 55 n1, 57 n5, 59 n8, 60 n12, 61 n15 n19, 65 n1 n2, 66 n5, 69 n16, 70 n19, 71 n22 n23, 72 n24, 73 n31 n34, 74 n35, 75 n2, 78 n8, 80 n16, 81 n17 n18 n20 n22, 82 n23, 83 n24, 84 n33, 85 n36 n37, 87 n38 n39
Bernard of Clairvaux xii, 19 n46
Berquin, Louis de xiv
bishops. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Boethius 14 n4
Brueghel, Pieter, the Younger 67 n11
Butheric 9 n26

Cádiz 9 and n18
Caesar, Julius 3
Capernaum, an image for the world 26, 31
Cassiodorus 7 n20
catechumen. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Catena aurea xii; parallels cited 23 n66, 25 n75, 26 n79, 63 n24, 64 n29, 66 n6, 113 n14, 114 n16
Catenae graecorum 14 n9; parallels cited 15 n18, 27 n81, 28 n84 n88, 29 n92, 35 n16, 37 n26, 39 n35, 43 n49, 45 n58, 46 n1, 47 n2, 50 n14, 54 n27, 55 n2, 57 n7, 60 n13, 62 n21, 63 n26 n27, 67 n10, 69 n15, 70 n20, 73 n34, 75 n1, 76 n4, 85 n31
Catullus, cited 29 n94

Celsus xiii; cited 35 n13
ceremonies. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Charles v xi, 2, 9
Christ. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Chrysologus, Petrus xii; cited 39 n35, 70 n18, 72 n25
church. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Cicero, cited 3 n5, 72 n26, 84 n29
concord: of apostles 23, 77, 83, 120; for a criminal purpose 48; of rulers xii, 2, 11
confession. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Croesus xiii, 107 and n36
crowd: eager for health and salvation 51, 55, 121; representing the world 5; unclean 48–9

demons. *See* Index of Theological Terms
despair. *See* Index of Theological Terms
disease, physical and spiritual compared 11, 13, 14, 16, 24, 25–6, 27, 28, 31, 32, 35–7, 40, 47, 49, 80, 84, 87, 88, 94, 96, 97, 103–4, 114, 121, 131
disciples: affect reputation of teacher 44, 117; relationship to teacher 27, 40–1, 46, 76, 90, 92, 107, 108
divorce. *See* Index of Theological Terms
doctor, evangelical 95, 99
dress 17, 45 and n57, 77; body as garment of soul 165

Erasmus, original works
- *Adagia*, cited (I ii 4) 36 n23, (I ii 15) 126 n20, (I iii 67) 107 n36, (I iii 82) 66 n4, (I iv 87) 92 n13, (II vii 2) 36 n22, (III v 24) 9 n32, (IV viii 86) 84 n30
- *Annotations* xii, xiii, xiv; cited (Matt 1:21) 132 n39, (Matt 3:17) 14 n8, (Matt 4:15) 67 n7, (Matt 11:12) 31 n4, (Matt 12:31) 53 n24, (Matt 24:17) 153 n6, (Mark 1:4) 16 n20, (Mark 1:12) 20 n50, (Mark 1:15) 21 n54, (Mark 2:26) 44 n51, (Mark 4:27) 60 n11 n12, (Mark 4:38) 63 n23, 64 n30, (Mark 5:23) 69 n14, (Mark 5:41) 73 n32, (Mark 6:3) 75 n2, (Mark 6:9) 77 n6, 78 n8 n10, 79 n11, (Mark 6:17) 81 n17, (Mark 6:56) 87 n40, (Mark 7:22) 92 n15, (Mark 7:25) 93 n19, (Mark 8:10) 100 n6, (Mark 8:12) 100 n7, (Mark 8:15) 101 n14, (Mark 9:29) 115 n20, (Mark 9:44) 119 n31, (Mark 9:46) 119 n32, (Mark 12:4) 143 n1, (Mark 12:11) 144 n4, (Mark 12:24) 146 n14, (Mark 14:1) 157 n3, (Mark 14:3) 157 n8, (Mark 14:20) 160 n17, (Mark 15:40) 173 n22, (Luke 7:4) 91 n11, (Acts 1:1) xii n9, (Acts 1:14) xii n10
- *Apologiae ad Bedam* xiv; cited 13 n1 n3. *See also* Béda
- *Colloquies*, cited 73 n28
- *De contemptu mundi* xiii; cited 30 n1, 92 n16, 164 n30
- *De esu carnium*, cited 89 n4
- *De pueris instituendis*, cited 33 n9, 124 n14
- *De ratione studii*, cited 33 n9
- *Oratio funebris Berthae de Heyen*, cited 73 n30
- *Parabolae*, cited 68 n13
- *Paraphrases*: on Matthew (Matt 3:1) 17 n35, (Matt 4:1) 20 n51, (Matt 3:9) 21 n54, (Matt 4:17) 22 n61, (Matt 9:15) 41 n39; on Mark: character of xiii; dedicated to Francis I xi; printing of xi; reception of xiv; style of xii and n5, xiv; work on xi; on Luke xi, 2; on John xi, 2

Eusebius, cited 81 n17
Euthymius xii; parallels cited 15 n18, 18 n38, 24 n71, 27 n81, 31 n6, 50 n14, 62 n20

faith. *See* Index of Theological Terms
fasting (dietary regulations). *See* Index of Theological Terms
fear of God. *See* Index of Theological Terms

Ferdinand xi, 2
Festus Pompeius, cited 5 n12
France 9, 11; Erasmus invited to visit 2
Francis I xi, xiv, 2, 3, 6, 12
freedom. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Fulgentius xii, cited 157 n9, 158 n11
funeral rites 72–3

Galen, cited 151 n4
Galilee: despised among Jews 18 and n40; meaning of name 22 and n60
Gallus 9 n29
gentiles. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Getes xiii, 78
gladiators 5, 7, 8
glory. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Gloss (*Glossa ordinaria*) xii; parallels cited 19 n45, 47 n3, 63 n24, 111 n8, 113 n13, 121 n3 n5, 144 n3, 149 n20 n22, 150 n24, 157 n2
God. *See* Index of Theological Terms
godliness and piety. *See* Index of Theological Terms
gospel. *See* Index of Theological Terms
grace. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Gregory the Great, cited 114 n16, 126 n21
Gregory of Nyssa, cited 66 n6

happiness: false 25; true 14–15, 133
hellebore 11
Henry VIII xi, 2, 9
Hercules 9
Heyen, Berta 73 n30
Hilary, St, cited 23 n66, 64 n29
Hippocrates xiii; cited 151 n4
Historia tripartita. *See* Cassiodorus
Homer 5; cited 72 n26
Honorius 7
Horace xiii; cited 39 n36, 78 n3 n9, 103 n19
Hugh of St Cher xii and n11; parallels cited xiii n12, 14 n6 n9 n11, 16 n24 n27, 23 n66, 26 n76, 28 n84 n86 n88, 37 n28, 38 n31, 52 n22, 61 n14, 67 n10, 71 n22

instruction, and process of unlearning 33 and n9, 42–3
Isocrates, cited 117 n27
Israel, meaning of name 94

jealousy 41, 74
Jericho, meaning of name 132
Jerome xii; parallels cited 16 n22, 17 n37, 18 n41, 19 n47, 22 n59 n60, 23 n67, 25 n74, 26 n79, 70 n19, 72 n24, 73 n32, 109 n3 n5, 132 n38, 138 n22 n23, 139 n28. *See also* Pseudo-Jerome
Jerusalem: fall of 153; meaning of name 138 and n22
John Chrysostom 14 n9, 16 n22; cited 9 n28 n29, 130 n34
Jordan, meaning of name 16 and n24
Josephus, cited 94 n26
justice. *See* Index of Theological Terms

kinship. *See* Index of Theological Terms

law: of nature 91; Twelve Tables 73. *See also* Index of Theological Terms
Libya xiii, 78
light. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Lucian, cited 73 n28
Lutheran doctrines. *See* Index of Theological Terms

martyrs 136, 172
medicine, science and practitioners of 13, 14, 15, 26, 35, 36, 37, 50, 69, 71, 79, 99
Menander, cited 20 n49
merit. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Midas xiii, 107 and n36
monks 7
Moses *See* Index of Theological Terms, sv 'law'
mountain, as image: of Christ 50; of contemplation 109; of gospel 50; of sublime knowledge 51, 110

Nero 5
Nicholas of Lyra xii and n11; parallels cited 14 n6 n12, 17 n31 n35, 24 n71, 35 n14, 70 n19 n20

orators 56, 99–100
Origen, cited 14 n9
Ortford 8
Ovid xiii; cited 72 n26, 78 n9, 92 n16

parables: Christ's actions are 95; simple and instructive 55–6, 57, 62, 95
paralysis, symptoms of 35
parents: children's obligations towards 54; filial devotion to 91; filial devotion in storks xiii, 91 and n9; limits of obligations towards 119, 122, 126–7
Paris, university of xiv; censures cited: on Mosaic law 13 n3, 22 n63; on observance of church regulations 42 n44, 43 n49, 44 n53, 45 n57; on other topics 13 n1, 36 n17, 37 n29, 48 n4, 56 n4, 130 n34
Passover, meaning of word 156
Paulinus, cited 9 n27
Persius, cited 103 n19
persona of narrator in paraphrase ix, 14 n7, 26 n77, 45 n55, 80 n15
philosophy: of the gospel 5, 23, 50, 120, 131; heavenly 43, 52, 75, 83, 96, 104; Stoic 103; of the world 5, 13, 22, 56, 61, 70, 98, 99, 120, 132, 148, 175
Plato xiii; cited 21 n56
Plautus xiii
Pliny, cited 11 n34, 16 n28, 73 n30, 91 n9
Plutarch, cited 9 n31
pope. *See* Index of Theological Terms
prayer. *See* Index of Theological Terms
priests. *See* Index of Theological Terms
prince, Christian xii, 3–8; as benefactor 6; and commercial interests 5; dispenser of justice 5; must imitate Christ 6; 'shepherd of the people' 5; and territorial expansion 9; and war 4–5, 8, 9, 10
Pseudo-Jerome (Walafrid Strabo) 14 n6; parallels cited 15 n16, 16 n21, 21 n54, 22 n59, 25 n74, 26 n79, 35 n15 n16, 50 n11, 51 n15 n18, 56 n3, 61 n14 n15 n17, 63 n22 n24, 65 n2 n3, 75 n3

Radulfus Ardens xii; cited 13 n2, 14 n6, 15 n16, 17 n34
repentance. *See* Index of Theological Terms
resurrection. *See* Index of Theological Terms
retreat 27, 83
reward. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Rhabanus Maurus xii, 26 n76

sabbaths. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Salonica 9
salvation. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Satan. *See* Index of Theological Terms
scholastics xiii
Scripture. *See* Index of Theological Terms
Seneca xiii, 9 and n16; cited 21 n57, 78 n7
shadows. *See* Index of Theological Terms, sv 'law'
shame. *See* Index of Theological Terms
sin. *See* Index of Theological Terms
sleep, as image: of death 61, 72; of oblivion 64, 155, 163
soldier, the Christian. *See* Index of Theological Terms
storm, as image: of adversity 63, 65, 86, 107, 109, 121, 127, 128, 129, 151, 161, 163; of temptations 64
Strabo, Walafrid 14 n6. *See also* Pseudo-Jerome
Suetonius, cited 5 n11
sword. *See* Index of Theological Terms

Telemachus 7, 8
Terence xiii
Tertullian, cited 146 n9
theatrics 56, 98, 148, 56 n4
Theodosius 8
Theophylact xii; parallels cited 21 n54, 24 n71, 25 n74, 27 n81, 28 n89,

29 n92 n93, 31 n3 n6, 33 n11, 35 n16, 37 n25 n26, 42 n45 n46, 62 n20, 63 n22 n23, 66 n5, 67 n8, 69 n14, 73 n34, 76 n4, 82 n23, 83 n27, 84 n32, 86 n37, 67 n8
Thomas à Kempis, cited 21 n57
Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury 8 and n22
tranquillity: companion of innocence 95; heavenly 132
Turks (Islam) 2–3, 12 n38

Victor of Antioch 14 n9
Virgil, cited 72 n26, 84 n30, 174 n25
virgins 136

war: just 3; ravages of 2–3, 8; roots of 10
Warham, William, archbishop of Canterbury 8
wine. *See* Index of Theological Terms, sv 'gospel'
wisdom: heavenly 95, 106, 146; human 22, 51, 106, 116, 120, 142
witnesses to Christ. *See* Index of Theological Terms
works. *See* Index of Theological Terms

Index of Theological Terms

ablutions, Pharisaical 16, 42, 89, 91–2, 148
Abraham, true descendants of 94
apostles: dull and weak 116, 127, 128, 130; follow Christ's example 106, 117, 135; humble and obscure 51, 80; as shepherds 117, 156; simple and unlearned 40, 51, 63, 77, 84, 87, 98, 131, 148; wrong ambition of 116–17, 129–30. *See also* disciples in General Index

baptism: evangelical 16, 19; and pattern in the gospel 16 n20; spiritual and carnal contrasted 15, 19
bishops: as conciliators 8; emblems of 6; of the gospel 41; negligent 64 and n30; as shepherds 7, 64, 85; as successors of the apostles 11; as teachers 86; true dignity of 7; and warfare 5–6

catechumen 16 and n21; seed a metaphor for 62 and n20; zeal of 31, 51
ceremonies: contrasted with evangelical freedom 26, 40–2; do not perfect 43 and n29, 45; Jesus has come to abolish 139, 175; superstitious observance by Pharisees 16 n20, 70, 89, 147–8. *See also* ablutions, dress, fasting, prayer
Christ: benefactor of mankind 6, 28, 41, 97; divine nature of 18, 19, 54, 145, 173; dual nature of ix, 173; an example to princes 6; head of the church 20, 22, 83; human nature of 14, 63, 138; the light of the world 26, 30, 86; the Messiah 14, 15, 18, 33, 41, 54, 105, 108, 112, 148; the physician 15, 26, 35, 36, 37, 49, 68, 70, 132; the prince of priesthood 137; the Saviour 6, 14, 16, 35 n14, 38, 75, 87, 105, 137, 160, 173; the shepherd 7, 84, 85, 100; stands above the law 45; suffered willingly and knowingly 128–9, 157, 159; the Wisdom of the Father 3
church: consensus of 23; images for: house or edifice 25, 26, 31, 138, 144, 157; ship 49, 64; bride 140, 149
confession: oral 94; public 71 and n22

demons, not to be listened to even if they speak the truth 24 and n24, 26, 49
despair: engendered by sin 156; not warranted 23, 65–6, 71, 74, 95, 96, 126, 127
divorce 121–3 and 123 n9

faith: contrasted with works or merit xiv, 37–8, 138; evangelical 23, 144, 160, 176; the gift of 60; not wordy 28; power of 32, 49, 141; simple 40, 48, 80, 117
fasting (dietary regulations): Erasmus' pronouncements on criticized by

Béda and the Sorbonne xiv, 42 n43 n44 n47; superstitious observance by Pharisees 42, 139, 148
fear of God, a step towards salvation 13 and n3, 67
freedom, evangelical 41–2, 42 n47, 44 and n53, 83

gentiles, similes for: blossoming tree 141; Matthew's banquet 39; walls joined by keystone 144
glory: accompanies virtue 30; among men 29, 30, 73, 96–7, 104, 116, 129; with God 52
God: glory of 52, 53, 71, 131, 138, 142, 155; the judge and avenger 3, 140; mercy and kindness of 14, 15, 16, 29, 34, 38, 53, 58, 68, 71, 94, 96, 140, 142, 154; might of 13, 53, 142, 146; wrath of 13, 140
godliness and piety: appearance and display of 102, 121, 135; evangelical 54, 62, 93, 136, 163; false 46, 89–91, 124, 139, 148–9; true 23, 39, 41, 45, 103, 147; zeal for 124–5
gospel: bread of the 93, 98, 99; as drama xii, 38, 55, 88, 125, 134, 136; of Mark an abridged version of Matthew xi, 14 and n8; teachers of the 18, 21, 50, 51, 55, 59–60, 77–8, 84, 99, 104, 110, 120, 122, 133, 136; wine of the 26, 43, 171, 173
grace: evangelical 16, 22, 74, 80, 94, 107, 175, 176; and love 14; likened to a fountain 15, 19; and perfection 18, 61

justice: carnal 40; evangelical 43; God's 36, 94; God's contrasted with man's 23 and n64; Mosaic 37; perfect 42, 45, 79, 90

kinship, spiritual, contrasted with carnal 54 and n27, 76, 94, 118 and n30

law: evangelical 23; John on the borderline between Old Testament and gospel 15, 21, 43, 82; of Moses and the Old Testament: carnal 21, 24, 75; holds terror 14, 15; shadows and figures of 14, 21, 22, 83, 136, 173; yields to love 44
light, as image of Christ or his gospel 15, 16, 21, 26, 30, 31, 59, 86, 87, 103, 132, 133
Lutheran doctrines, supposedly found in Erasmus' writings xiv, 24 n68, 26 n77, 36 n17, 42 n47, 45 n55, 88 n3, 94 n25

merit: accrues through generosity 60; and faith 37, 94, 138; and God's judgment 130; and gratuitous kindness of God 68, 96, 113. *See also* works
Moses. *See* law

pope, authority of 2, 42 n47
prayer: invigorates the mind 83; Pharisaical 41, 134, 148; Satan defeated by 20
priests: attitude towards sinners 96; as intermediaries between man and God 32; as shepherds 84–5, 97; teachers of the gospel 83, 86

repentance 14 n12
resurrection, as metaphor of a new life in Christ 74
reward, good men assured of heavenly 8, 60, 130 and n34

sabbaths, and Christian feast days 44 n53
salvation: Christ the source and author of 16, 18, 72, 95, 105, 114; despair a step towards 36 and n21; through faith 26, 88, 107; fear a step towards 13, 67; gratuitous 71, 79; trials and suffering conducive to 134
Satan, meaning of name 106
Scripture: exegesis of xii; study of popular xii, 10–11. *See also* names of exegetes in General Index

shadows. *See* law
shame: salutary, prompting repentance 74; useless, contrasted with salutary confession 36, 68, 70
sin against the Spirit 53 and n24
soldier 66; the Christian 20–1, 53
sword: of the Gospel 164; spiritual and temporal 4–5
wine. *See* gospel
witnesses to Christ, demons rejected as 24, 26, 49
works, reliance on 22, 37 n29, 138. *See also* merit

Index of Greek and Latin Words Cited

LATIN WORDS

a latere 50 n13
cervical 63 n23
contaminatio xiii
cordatus 147 n17
cornutus 121 n3
evangelium 13 n1, 14 and n6
fabula 136 n8
fortuito 115 n20
forum 87 n40
luscus 119 n32
mare 67 n7
parentalia 73 and n29
platea 87 n40
poenitentiam agere 14 n12
pulvillus 63 n23
salvificus 137 n15
sapiens 147 n17
sero 156 n18
stagnum 67 n7

GREEK WORDS

ἄτοπος 139 n26
drama 136 n8
Ἕλληνις 93 n19
ἐρώτημα 121 n3
κατακυλιστή 22 n60
κεφαλαιόω 143 n1
νουνεχῶς 147 n17
παραπορεύομαι 115 n20
parasceve / *παρασκευή* 157 and n4, 173 and n23
τὸ προσκεφάλαιον 63 n23